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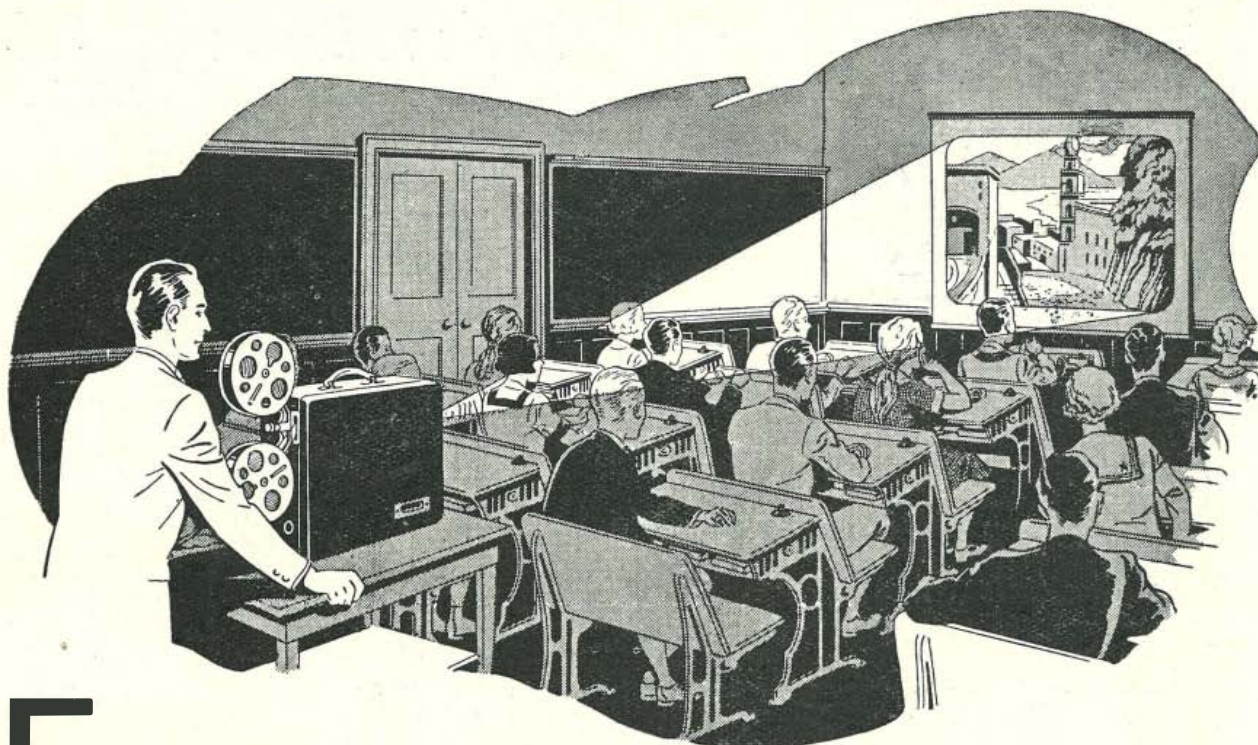
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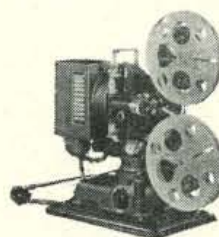
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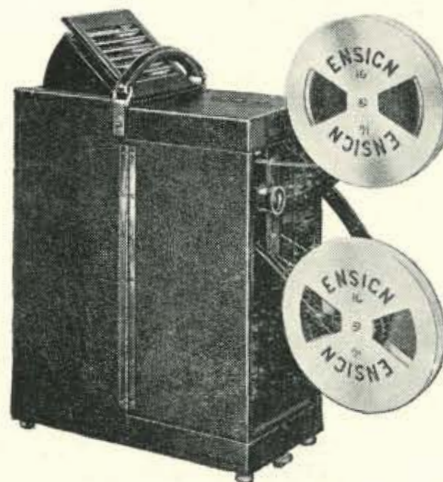


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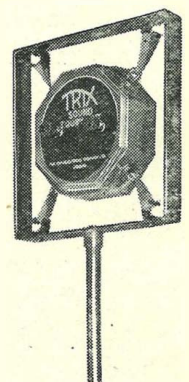
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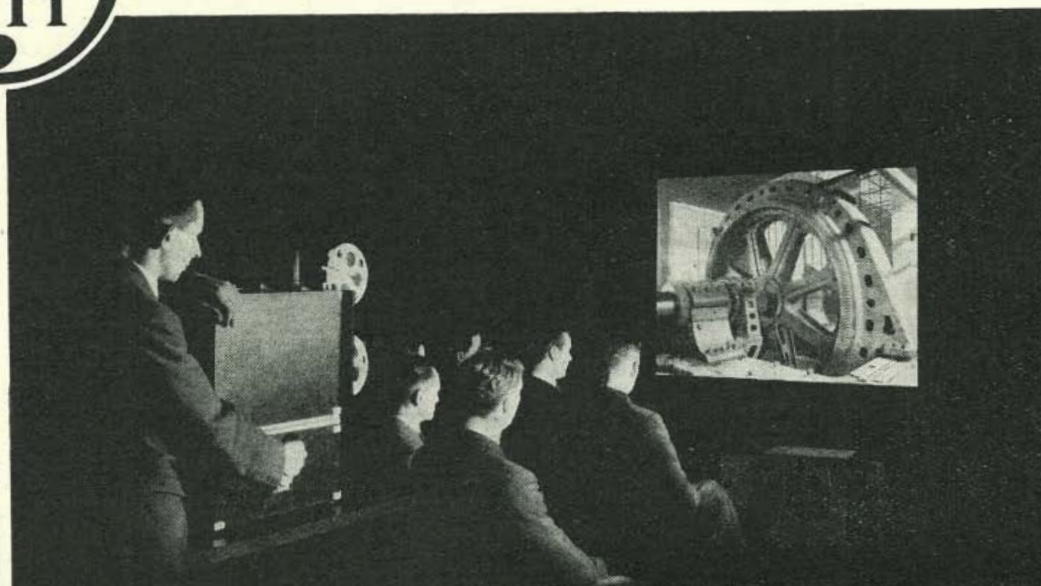
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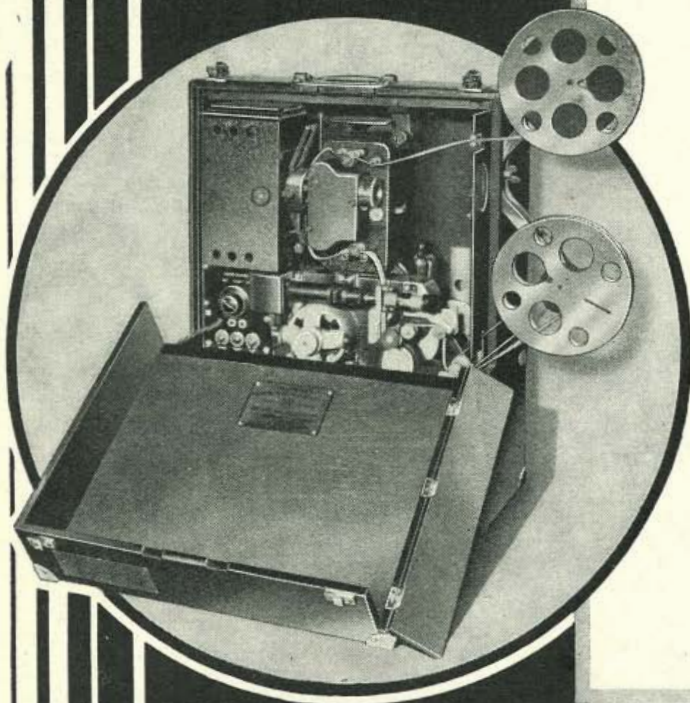


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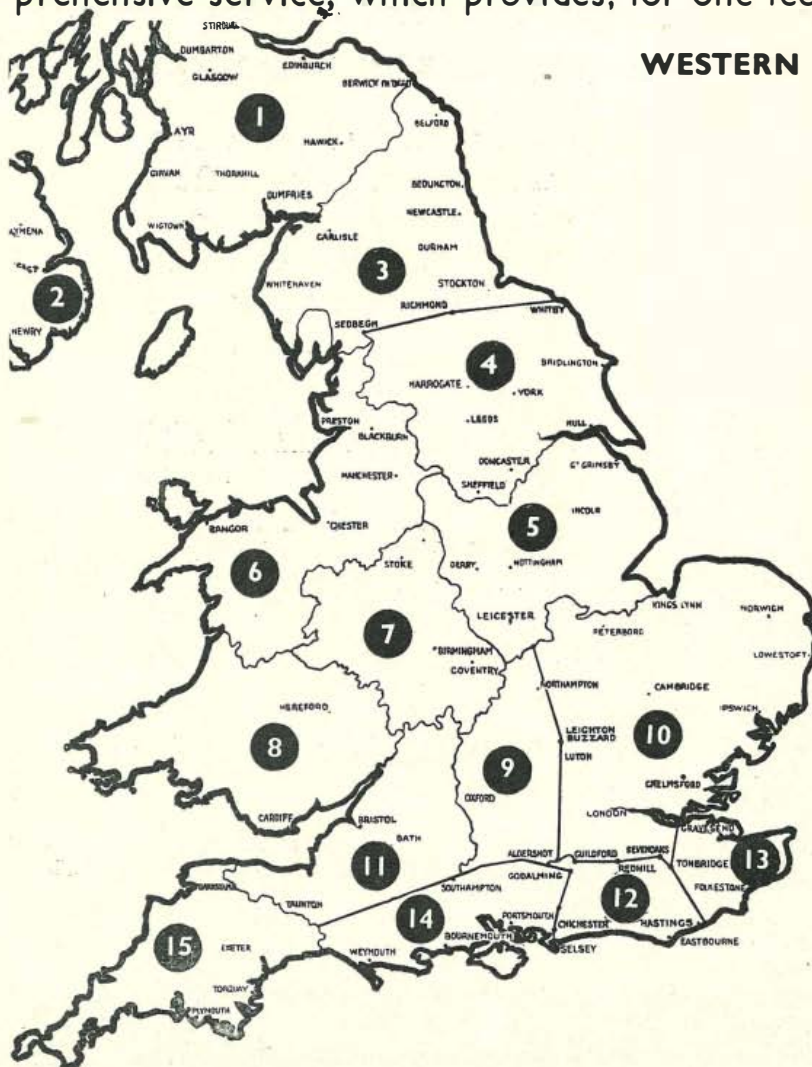
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## THE FIL

THE Archbishop of Canterbury, in the course of his speech at the annual dinner of the Cinematograph Exhibitors Association—a speech whose content and context deserved far more publicity and comment than it received in the Press—spoke a sentence which deserves to be inscribed above the doors of every public place of entertainment in the kingdom.

"I know quite well," said His Grace "that the main motive (for the exhibition of films) is to make a profit, quite legitimately, by finding out what the public wants and trying to supply it. *But the public always wants something a few degrees higher than the servants of the public suppose.* This is true of the platform, the pulpit and the Press. It is also true of music and the drama." And the Archbishop went on to point out that it was also true of the cinema. "The British public is tired of

wallowing in the Hollywood of five or ten years ago. I plead that your experiments as a great self-respecting art should be made more and more to discover just where you can reach the public at a higher level and keep them there." The applause with which this plea was received represented more than a mere polite acquiescence in an exhortation which might be taken for granted. It represented rather an awakening, not yet fully complete, perhaps, to an old truth which the Archbishop was presenting in new words—that those whose business it is to "give the public what it wants" cannot really divest themselves of social responsibility, for the fact is that the film public (of to-day at least) wants "a lead" more than it wants anything else.

On the same day as the Archbishop spoke these words of wisdom, the Cine-



matograph Exhibitors were themselves discussing "the continued decline in patronage" of the cinemas, which was estimated at 21 per cent. over the past two years. No doubt much of this is attributable, as suggested by Mr. T. Ormiston, M.P., to the incidence of the Entertainment Tax; but one has only to turn to the pages of the Annual Report of the Cinematograph Exhibitors Association to find that exhibitors themselves are aware of other causes.

Not only, according to this Report, has there been an over-building of new cinemas, but there is more competition among cinemas than ever before "to acquaint the public of the attractiveness of the wares which the respective cinemas have to offer." More competition, be it noted, but less response! "To such an intensive extent has this activity developed that the public has become so acquainted with the respective merits of the various films offered *that it increasingly declines to patronise the programme picture, and selects only those of merit.* The habit of dropping into the cinema to pass the time, which was so marked a feature of silent days, had definitely become a matter of history. To-day the public is shopping for its entertainment, and is showing the keenest discrimination in its selection. *Unfortunately there are too many programme pictures which cannot withstand such a critical examination.*"

These candid remarks not only bear out much of the Archbishop's advice to the film trade, but also go to show how timely is the arrival upon the scene of the British Film Institute, one of whose specific objects is to influence public opinion to appreciate the value of films as entertainment and instruction. Since its inception last year the Institute has already made substantial headway in the direction of stimulating the new movement of film public opinion. Through the membership of the provincial Film Institute Societies (among which we are glad to welcome newcomers since our last issue at Brighton, Bradford and Belfast) a stream of new patrons is being brought back to the cinemas, more discriminating, perhaps, in their tastes than others who

have fallen away, but equally insistent to see the pictures they want.

Another sign of the times is the continually growing interest which is being taken in the educational possibilities of the film. The recent speech of Mr. Ramsbotham at Saffron Walden shows that the Board of Education is giving careful attention to the possibilities, and is anxious to see more and bolder experiments on the part of education authorities. On the side of film production, too, there is corresponding activity; and the programmes of Gaumont British Instructional and other companies, as well as the new documentary films undertaken by the G.P.O. Film Unit, promise to provide the teacher and all who use films for educational purposes with more varied and more valuable material than they have ever before been offered.

---

Since the publication of the last issue of SIGHT AND SOUND the British Film Institute has been assured of financial backing by an announcement made at the end of January by the Lord President of the Council, Mr. Baldwin.

In reply to a question from Mr. John Buchan as to the allocation of the Cinematograph Fund, Mr. Baldwin said that the Privy Council had decided to make a grant of £5,000 to the British Film Institute "which was formed to promote the objects for which the Cinematograph Fund was constituted under the Sunday Entertainments Act, 1932." Mr. Baldwin reminded the House that the Fund was not large and it was in consequence improbable that the Privy Council would be in a position to entertain other applications for assistance. A week later Mr. Baldwin said that no decision had been reached with regard to the allocation of the Fund in subsequent years and he was not in a position to anticipate that decision. In a subsequent reply, Mr. Baldwin stated that the amount paid into the Cinematograph Fund amounted to £5,347.

---

On March 14th, Mr. R. S. Lambert gave evidence on behalf of the Governors of the British Film Institute before the Select Committee of Public Estimates at the House of Commons confirming the film activities of the General Post Office.





THE SOIL IS THIRSTY, by Raismann (Arcos)

## NOTES OF THE QUARTER

### Attacks on the Film Institute

Upon the eve of the Privy Council's decision as to the allocation of grants from the Cinematograph fund there was distributed to members of Parliament and other persons, a booklet enclosed in a wrapper marked "British Film Institute Exposed,"† and entitled *The Cinema and the Public—a Critical Analysis of the Origin, Constitution and Control of the British Film Institute*.\* This booklet was described as having been written by Mr. Walter Ashley, who has previously contributed to several journals criticisms of the Film Institute. One of the objects of this particular booklet was to show that the Film Institute was unworthy of receiving grants from the Cinematograph Fund, on the ground, among others, that it had fallen under the control of the film trade, and therefore lacked "indisputable commercial disinterestedness." In case, however, there may be quarters where these charges might be taken seriously, it may be pointed out that enquiry from Messrs. Ivor

Nicholson & Watson has shown that this booklet is not one of those publications issued, as books frequently are, at the publisher's own risk, but that it has been issued at the expense, not of the author, but of Sir James Marchant. In this booklet it is argued that the Film Institute is under trade control because three out of the ten members of th

atives of the trade! Great play is also made of the fact that the Film Institute, by its constitution, binds itself not to interfere with the censorship of films, or with matters of purely trade concern. These however, are not, as the booklet suggests, signs of trade domination, but arise naturally as consequences of the recommendations made originally in *The Film in National Life*, the Report of the Commission on Educational and Cultural Films. From the very beginning the Film Institute was planned as a *constructive*, not as a *restrictive*, influence on films; while on the other hand there was never any intention of giving the Institute the function of producing films or otherwise competing with existing enterprises in the film trade. But these

† Subsequently withdrawn by the publishers.

\* Ivor Nicholson & Watson; price 1s.



facts are sufficiently well known not to need further labouring, especially in view of the fact announced by Mr. Baldwin (immediately after the issue of *The Cinema and the Public*) that the Privy Council had decided to make a grant of £5,000 to the British Film Institute.

### New Educational Films: G.B.I. Programme

Two French films (both on 35 mm. and 16 mm. stock) are completed in the language section of the G.B. Instructional programme. One deals with the difficult problem of the French vowel sound "u" and the other with conversation (in French and English) at a railway station, introducing the words practised in the first film. Six films on elementary hygiene, made in collaboration with Dr. Winifred Cullis and the staff of the London School of Medicine, are nearly complete; Mr. Percy Smith is at work on a biology film; a film on mensuration is in production, and it has been decided to make a series of films on physical training to illustrate the new L.C.C. syllabus. In natural science *The Thistle* has been completed with the co-operation of the Film Committee of the London Teachers Association, and a second one on the comparison of the Spear Thistle with the Creeping Thistle is almost ready. An extensive study of East Anglian farming has been undertaken for films on regional geography, and geographical backgrounds for literature films have now reached scenario stage.

An interesting addition to the Western Electric hire service programmes, available on special terms for schools and other educational bodies is the 16 mm. film *Climbing Mount Everest* by Wyn Harris (commentary by F. S. Smythe) reviewed in our last issue.

*The Rugged Island*, a full length (standard) story film of the Shetlands, produced and financed by Miss Jenny Brown, a graduate of Glasgow University, has had a successful week's showing to the public in the studios of the Edinburgh Film Guild. Miss Brown, who spent a year in the Shetland Islands making the film, is the amateur producer of several substandard documentaries. The setting of *The Rugged Island* makes full use of typical Island scenery and industries, and the photography is said to be extremely beautiful.

A Society for the production of Shakespearean films has been formed under the direction of Sir Frank Benson.

## NEWS FROM ABROAD

### The Rome Congress of Educational Films

**A**N International Congress of Educational and Instructional Cinematography is taking place at Rome this month under the auspices of the International Institute of Educational Cinematography (the I.C.E.). The Institute was founded in 1928 at the suggestion of the Italian Government, as an organ of the League of Nations, for the purpose of developing the national and international use of educational films. Part of its work has been concerned with the International circulation of educational films through the Customs Convention at

Geneva, which was described in our last issue. The present congress is planned to deal exhaustively with every aspect of the educational film. It will be divided into three sections, and the following is a brief summary of the programme of discussion:—

#### I. Visual Education

1. Visual Educational Methodology: use of the cinema in various grades of teaching and for various subjects;
2. Cinema and visual education.
3. Cinema and industry.
4. Cinema and agriculture.

#### II. Adult Education

1. Hygiene and social welfare: elementary hygiene propaganda, popular health education, systems of physical education, safety first propaganda and defence of the race (protection of physical and mental deficients).
2. Cinema and popular education. This section covers the preservation of documentary information, the possibility of offering to the greatest number of persons the enjoyment of art and of scientific discoveries; an approach to the study of social questions, and the possibility of sound and interesting recreation for leisure hours.
3. Economy propaganda. Social providence and saving as factors of social order and progress, and their propaganda by means of the cinema.
4. The State and the Cinema: legislative measures, and the organisation of museums, archives, and film libraries.
5. Technical. The best films from a technical point of view; collaboration between the artistic and the technical side of film making; possibilities and limits of the collaboration between teachers and technicians; technical training of the teacher; rudimentary courses in didactic and educational technique; film titles, talking films and the teacher's lessons; non-inflammable films; apparatus for scientific cinematography; standardisation of width of sub-standard films; colour cinematography in visual instruction films; taking and projecting at lower and higher speed; micro-cinematography; television, etc.

#### III. International Life

Documentary cinema. The future of the cinema in intellectual and social life. International problems raised by the talking and sound film; influence of the cinema on various national mentalities; cinema and the protection of youth, recreational films and youth; cinema and religion.

#### GERMANY

At a recent conference of German film producers, Dr. Goebbels, Minister for Propaganda, delivered an address on German national films.

"When I have the conviction," he said, "that a sincere artistic ideal lies behind a film I will protect it. I only ask that it should not offend against the elementary laws of life and morals. I do not ask that a film should begin and end with a National Socialist parade march."

Nazi films with a strong political bias, such as *Hans Westmar*, *Victory of Faith* and *Storm Trooper Brand*, have not proved popular, and Dr. Goebbels invited film producers to turn to non-political aspects of German life for their subjects, promising that there would be no interference beyond what was absolutely necessary for the welfare of the Nazi State.

A new act passed on February 16th gave complete control, censorship and direction of all film activity to the Ministry of Propaganda. A Reich Film Critic has been appointed whose duty it is to see all films, German and foreign.

#### NEW FOREIGN FILMS

Among new films in production abroad is a Czechoslovakian version of the life of Mozart, based on the novel by Moerike, *Mozart's Journey to Prague*. This is to be made by the A-B. Film Studios, Prague-Barrendor. In Paris Jean Monti and Jean Marguerite are filming a history of the famous Opera House, Paris; including the rise of the Ballet School.

The Sovkino film *Men and Jobs*, by Macharet, a new Soviet director, may be shown in this country in the near future. It deals with the adventures of an American engineer in Russia and the efforts of the clumsy and primitive "shock-brigades" to imitate his technical efficiency.



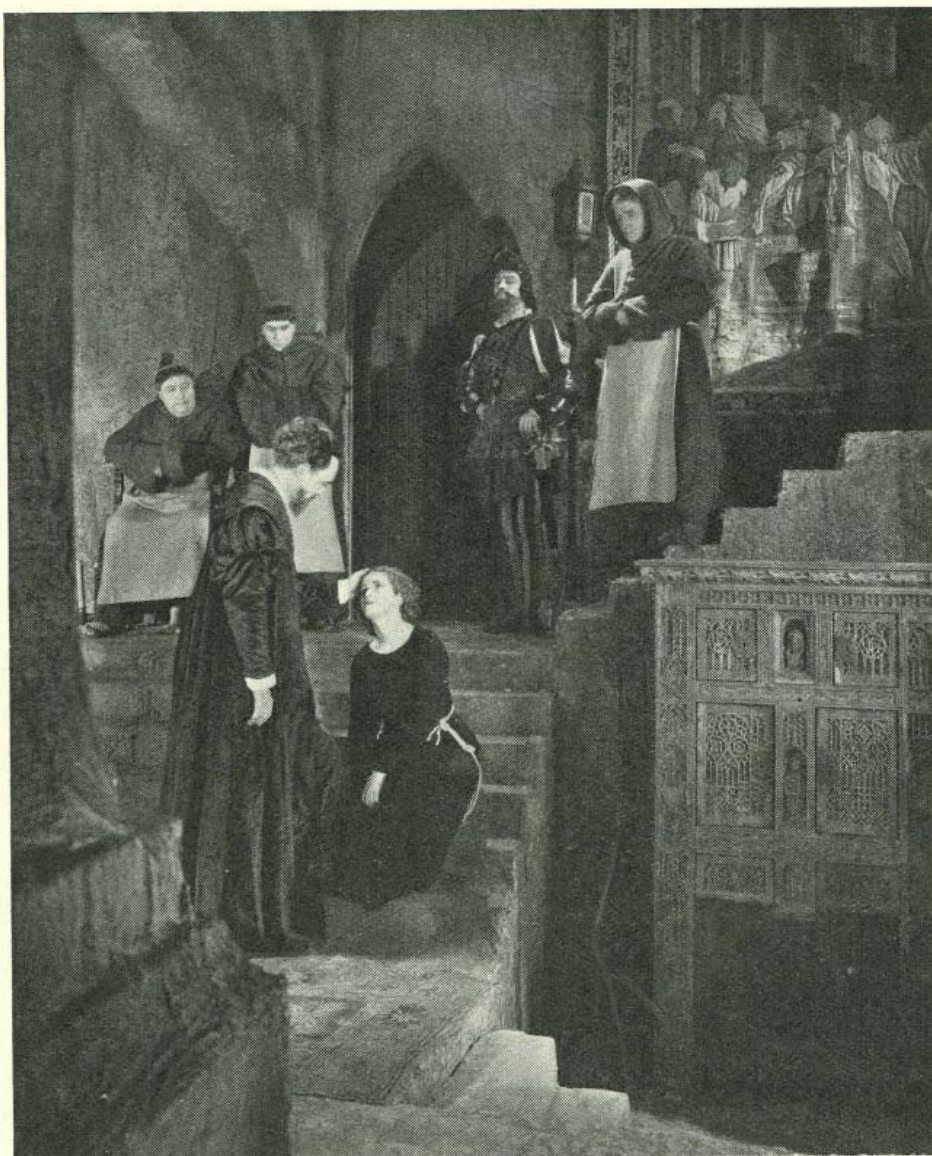
# HOW TO GET THE FILMS YOU WANT

By R. S. Lambert

From an address broadcast to schools on February 27th

I DARESAY that most people go fairly frequently to the pictures, perhaps once a week or even oftener; but I wonder how often they have had the kind of experience that was mine a few weeks ago. I live some little way off from a first-class cinema; but now and again I take the family out on Saturday afternoon or evening to the nearest town, which happens in our case to be Kingston in Surrey.

We go "on spec." hoping to find something to our taste. Well, the other evening we went out, not knowing beforehand what was in the programme of any of the four or five bigger picture houses in Kingston. When we got there, we looked at the posters outside the theatres, but we weren't struck by any of them. We couldn't remember having read in the papers about any of the feature films that were being starred there—and so we tried going round and asking at each picturehouse what the picture they were showing was about. And—believe it or not—there wasn't *one* where the commissionaire outside, or the box-office people inside, knew anything about it. "Oh, we haven't had time to see it," they all said. So there we were left without the slightest help for our choice; we might have taken a lucky dip, but previous experience had warned us that, if we did this, we usually got bad results twice out of every three times. So we were cautious. We gave the cinema a miss, and went to a cafe where there was dancing, and we ate ice cream and trifle and drank lemonade and coffee instead, till it was time to go home.



Conrad Veidt with Peggy Ashcroft in *THE WANDERING JEW* (Gaumont)

Now that was pretty ignominious; and yet I believe we are not the only family that have had that kind of experience. In fact, I think that, with variations, it is quite a common experience. At least it is with those who want to *choose*. I was brought up to want to choose for myself the amusements I patronised. I can remember when the cinema was only just beginning, and the theatre was the normal place of entertainment. No-one intelligent ever thought, or thinks, of going to the theatre on the "lucky dip" principle. He picks out what he wants to see, on the recommendation of friends or others, and he tries to go there first. But with the cinema it is somehow different. There seem to be thousands, even millions, of people who are content to go to the pictures say once a week as a habit, without worrying much about what they're going to see—they take it for granted. After all, the picturehouse is comfortable, cheap and warm; there's generally music—an organ in the super-cinema—a cafe ready to hand, and other advantages. As long as the programme is tolerably funny, why bother?

And there would be no need to bother, but for



the fact that a good number of us find that, after a time, the programmes tend to seem monotonous, and that we have to sit through more rubbish than we want in order to see the pictures we specially appreciate. There's a lot of healthy discontent abroad nowadays about the films; many of us are asking for more variety, more experiment, and better stories. Is there anything we can do to hasten the process of improvement?

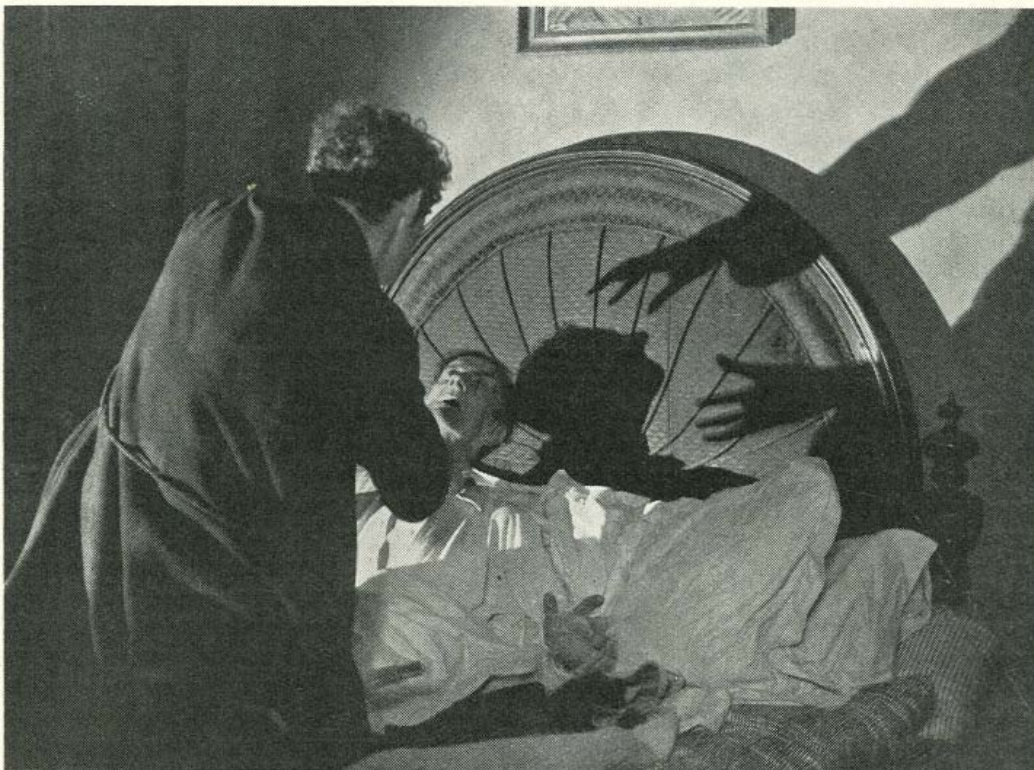
My answer is—yes, a great deal. But first of all, let me emphasize two rather obvious, but sometimes neglected points. To get better films, you must first **be** a filmgoer, and secondly, be an *intelligent* filmgoer. Of course most young people under the age of, say 35, don't want to be told to *be* filmgoers. They go naturally just as they listen to wireless, are willing to fly, or to drive a motor car, and so forth. But plenty of fully grown men and women—especially uncles, aunts, fathers, mothers and teachers—are not filmgoers at all. You still meet the elderly educated person who is not ashamed to say, "No, I've never been to a 'talkie,'" or, "Of course, I don't go to the cinema." Now those people are like non-voters at a general election. They just don't count. They are not helping to get better films, or exercising any influence at all on the cinema—in spite of their education and intelligence. Some of them have tried the pictures in years gone by, and been shocked or bored—and they have got the habit of staying away. The first thing we want to do is to bring them back—to get them to become filmgoers again. Then they will count for a positive force which we can begin to find a way to use.

But alas, to be a filmgoer is not necessarily to be an intelligent one. Far from it. Every new invention, especially those that affect everyone, like the film, the wireless and the motor car, call for the

acquisition of a new kind of receptivity on the part of those who use them and live with them. Old people don't learn to drive cars as readily as young ones. In the early days of motoring, horses shied, dogs and chickens got run over at every turn. But after fifteen or twenty years had passed, horses, dogs and chickens became motor-wise, or acquired a sort of road-sense (so did the drivers of cars, or some of them—not enough, I admit). Exactly the same process takes place with radio and the film. Wireless listeners learn to use their ears, to listen intelligently and to discriminate between what they hear. And filmgoers have to learn to use their eyes, before they can become effective critics of film programmes.

In a little half-crown book which has just been published by Messrs. Faber called *For Filmgoers Only: The Intelligent Filmgoer's Guide to the Films*, the well-known critic, Miss C. A. Lejeune, describes the process of learning to use one's eyes at the cinema. "I maintain," she says, "that anyone who uses his eyes properly at the cinema can learn to estimate very closely, in advance, the quality of any given film. . . . For anybody who really wants to learn to be a good critic, the *first minutes* of a film contain most of the facts that he will have to know." What are called the "credit-titles" of a film—the names of the producer, director, players, author, art director, cameraman, etc.—afford the clues from which the intelligent filmgoer can learn to form a judgment and pick his entertainment. Knowledge of the principal producing companies and the type of work they specialise in, of the name of the leading producers (the man who controls the cost and the main story of the film), and directors (the man who is responsible for the actual making of the film), and of the best cameramen—this provides a first basis for becoming a sound film

critic, according to Miss Lejeune. It is an exciting business this, testing your powers of observation, and your memory. But it is worth doing, as through it you begin to become a force that counts—a patron worth attracting and keeping from the box-office point of view. It has sometimes been said that you get out of a film what you put into it, and this is true at any rate of the better class of film. Most of us in



THE TELL-TALE HEART  
from Edgar Allen Poe's gruesome story, by a new British director, Desmond Hurst. (Fox)





LA ROBE ROUGE, by Jean de Marguenat (Ace) at the Academy Theatre, London.

French



UNFINISHED SYMPHONY, by Willy Forst, at the Curzon Theatre, London.

Austrian





Elisabeth Bergner and Douglas Fairbanks in CATHERINE THE GREAT, by Alexander Korda (London Film Productions)

If this provision of the Act were modified to recognise the special character of the type of film we are discussing, by the imposition of a Quota obligation in proportion to its necessarily limited distribution, there would be no need to worry about the film supply for an unusual films theatre; the studios of the world would provide enough material even for a weekly change. At the moment, fortunately, there is an accumulation; but ultimately, it will be a matter of urgency to secure the relief under the Films Act which I have suggested.

Having confessed to my commercial interest in the unusual films theatre I hope I may be credited with being unaffected by it in certain conclusions which I have drawn from our experience, and in regard to which other opinions would be valuable.

Firstly, I think the commercial success of any theatre playing such films as *Thunder Over Mexico*, *Dreaming Lips*, *Morgenrot*, *Madchen in Uniform*, and their like is a most significant thing from the point of view of the objects of the British Film Institute, which is the improvement of the entertainment provided for the general public. It proves that these objects are not faddist but already shared by a section of the public. There is here a definite *commercial* encouragement of better class production.

Secondly, it seems to me that from the point of view of the Film Societies the existence of a permanent theatre showing the very films which pre-

viously they could only see privately, often under difficulties, is a very big advance. The repertory cinema, to give it a name which indicates its artistic affinity if not its methods, is not a theory but a live and very inspiring fact. To my mind its success (which I am sure can be repeated in half a dozen more big towns) is an indication that the time is ripe for a new phase of film society activity; endorsement of a quality cinema may now be more effective propaganda than protest against an unsatisfactory one.

I see no reason why a film society should not be associated very closely with the conduct of the specialised cinema or cinemas of its town. Personally I should welcome co-operation in film selection and in various other ways. It would not be one-sided, by the way; the theatre can make members for the society just as the society can make patrons for the theatre.

Lastly, the successful establishment of an unusual films theatre should mean the provision of a recognised cinema cultural centre; the natural home of experimental educational displays, of private exhibitions of medical, scientific or commercial films, in fact of all movements having for their aim the advancement of the art of the cinema. I cannot help thinking that all interested in these many activities would find a new sense of reality in them if they functioned in an institution which had demonstrated its ability to stand on its own feet in a commercial world.





CATHERINE THE GREAT: Sketch for setting of the scene on the opposite page, by Vincent Korda

## THE ARTIST AND THE FILM

By Vincent Korda

Art Director, London Film Productions, Ltd.

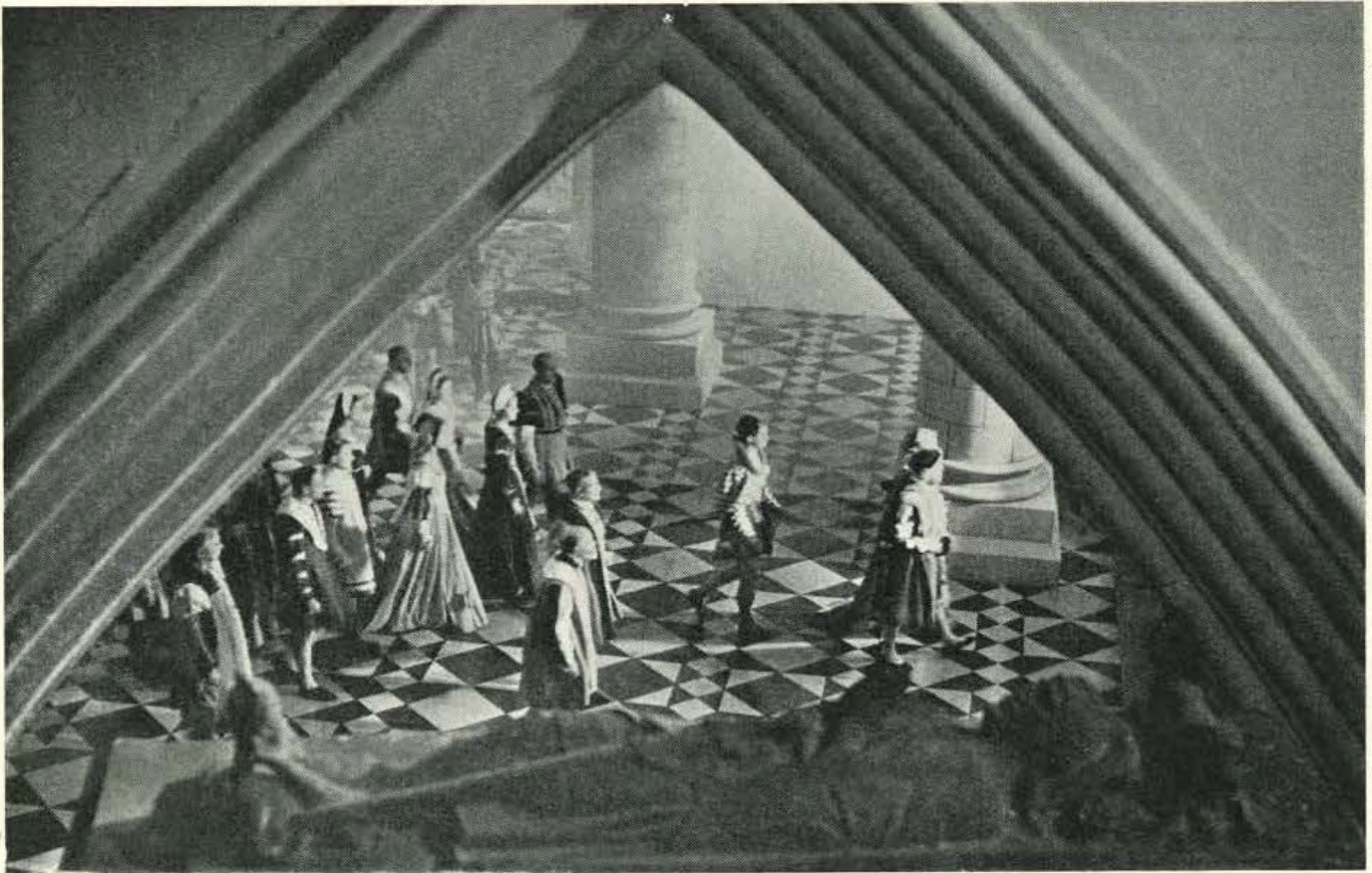
MUCH of the success of a modern film production depends on the work of the art director, but when we talk of "art" in relation to the film, we must consider it not as a spontaneous and inspired creation, but quite definitely as an "applied" art, bound in scope by severely practical technical limitations. The first essentials of the film are movement, and the free action of its characters. It is the task of the art director to make that movement possible, and to provide the characters with an appropriate setting—a setting which must never in itself intrude, but must always remain solely in the background. So soon as an audience exclaims "What a marvellous set!" the art director has failed in his task. The realistic set never becomes the whole focus of attention. It should give an atmosphere of reality, without itself being noticeable.

Granting this particular limitation, and realising that there is more to a film than the most magnificent of sets, the art director is faced with the very concrete problem of creating and building his set at a minimum expenditure of time and money, and producing results which will satisfy three very important people—the director, the cameraman and the sound engineer.

I myself am first and foremost an artist. Until a few years ago I had no thought of ever turning my art into film channels, nor can I profess to be either an architect or a film technician. In that respect I am extremely fortunate in having as my collaborator a first-class architect in the person of F. J. Hallam, as well as the unstinted assistance of a band of theoretical experts. The result is that I am able to devote my whole attention to the business of screen effects. The work of an art director is by no means easy, nor is his position the sinecure that it is often supposed to be. The work demands unlimited imagination, wide experience, and a discriminating common sense.

Having satisfied the author that the designs for the sets comply with his descriptions; having persuaded the director that they tally with his own conception of the author's ideas; having proved to the sound engineer that their acoustic properties are satisfactory, and that there will be ample room for his beloved "mike boom," there still remains another collaborator to satisfy—namely the camera. And the camera is a hard task-master. While you may dismiss as sheer nonsense that old cliché about the camera never lying (it can be an inveterate liar





Set from *THE PRIVATE LIFE OF HENRY VIII*. (London Films) with Vincent Korda's original design



on occasion) it must nevertheless be admitted that there is no critic so hard to please. Every scene must be designed so that it shall appear to the eye of the camera just as though it were seen through the human eye.

For though the camera is such a sensitive instrument, the human eye is even more sensitive. The camera ceases at the sensitised negative, but behind the human eye lies the brain. And it is the brain which causes us, on entering a room, to retain subconsciously an impression of every feature in it after a first glance round, even though the eye may be focussed on some particular object. But the camera can only give the picture of things within the exact range of its lens and within rigid limits of height and width. Limitations—technical, financial and mechanical—abound in almost every aspect of cinema. It is in overcoming these limitations of the camera lens that the craft of the art director makes itself apparent. He it is who creates the illusion to be registered in the subconscious mind of the audience, of a world beyond the immediate confines of the set.

The most realistic sets are of no use if their photographic value is wrong. Every set must be conceived in terms of visual images and of light and shade. You may establish a mood by changing the lines of a scene or even its colour. You may decide the whole character of a picture by the angle from which you decide to photograph.

There are a vast number of different aspects of the film art director's job. There are trick effects involving models, back-projection and similar specialised knowledge. But these are incidentals. What really counts is camera consciousness. The artistic value of innumerable productions would be greatly enhanced if only producers would take the art director fully into their confidence in the planning of a film. As it is, too often the poor fellow is expected to achieve miracles overnight, and there is not much to be done once each production has gone on the floor.

My major work during the past two years has been the setting of period pictures, and a word on my experiences may be of interest. It is my belief that in designing the settings for a period film a general effect should be aimed at, which, though historically sound, should never confuse through too great attention to minute historical detail. Thus in *Henry VIII* I endeavoured to suggest the simple magnificence of Tudor England, and in *Catherine the Great* the splendour of eighteenth century Russia. I have recently returned from a trip to Spain, where I have been making sketches and preliminary studies for the forthcoming London Films production, *Exit Don Juan*. I hope that I shall be able to recapture in the *decor* of this film something of the beauty and spirit of old Spain, with its court-yards and market-towns, which have changed only imperceptibly during the last five hundred years.

Sometimes it has been suggested to me that the artist, by reason of his calling, is the fittest person for the task of actually directing a film. I can hardly

believe that this suggestion can be altogether practicable. Just as the stage producer seldom makes a good film director, because of the essential differences in technique, so the artist can seldom change from the easel to the camera. There are, however, abundant opportunities for the artist in film production along the lines I have indicated, provided that he always remembers that free expression and artistic pretensions are strictly bounded by the mechanical nature of his craft.

## THE ST. PANCRAS EXPERIMENT

"The taste of the next generation is largely formed at school; therefore the schools cannot afford to neglect so important a factor as the film in education of a generation which goes regularly and naturally to the cinema. . . . But it is in the public cinema that the film has its strongest hold on national interest and therefore its greatest cultural and social influence notably on children and adolescents."

(*The Film in National Life*)

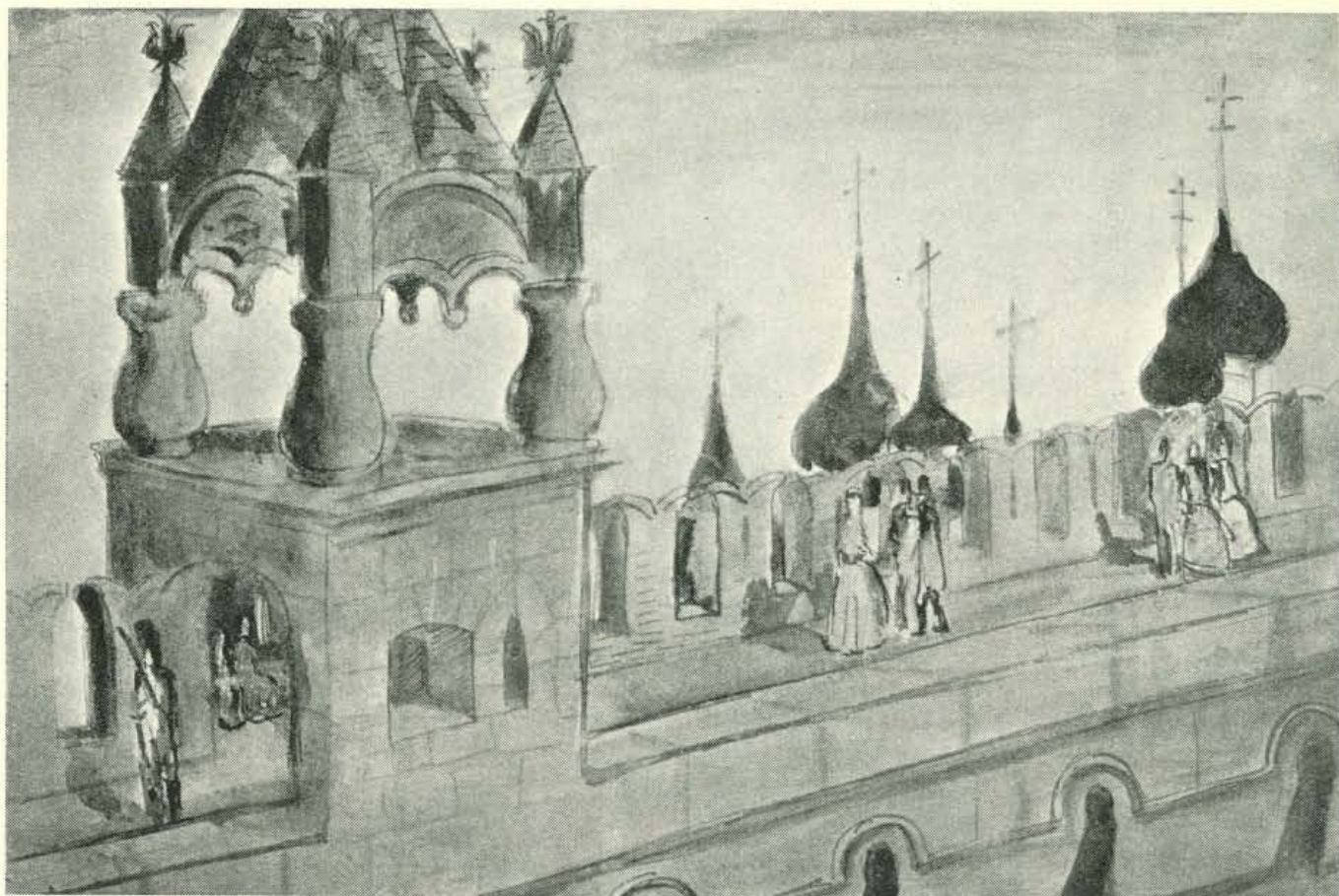
It was in 1932 that the St. Pancras experiment was started. The cinemas are closed to the public in the mornings and the schools (with a few exceptions) are without projectors. Could not the school children be taken to the local cinema in the mornings when there was no public performance?

This proposition was put before a conference of head teachers of St. Pancras schools in the autumn of 1932. It was agreed that, provided the sanction of the L.C.C. and Board of Education could be obtained, an experimental matinee should be held at the Camden Hippodrome. The cost was to be borne from the school funds of those schools sending children. We were able to make arrangements for the stewarding of the hall by teachers from the schools, and the proprietors of the cinema made special terms. The performance was recognised as an educational visit, and the children attending were chosen from selective central schools and senior schools within easy walking distance of the theatre. Approximately 1,000 pupils were present. The Mayor of St. Pancras, members of the L.C.C., inspectors of the Board of Education and of the L.C.C., and others interested, including the head teachers of most of the schools in St. Pancras were invited and attended. The films shown were *Drifters*, *Turbulent Timber* and *The Swallow Tail Butterfly*.

A conference of head teachers was held after two matinees, and it was decided to continue the experiment. Two more performances were arranged; one for pupils from senior schools and one for children from junior schools. It was also resolved to test by means of a questionnaire the comparative value of the silent film with captions and the silent film with captions and a narrator.

*Drifters*, the epic of the herring fishery directed by John Grierson, was the film chosen for the test. The theatre was fitted with microphone and loud speakers, and the narrator had the advantage of a conference with Mr. Grierson which was invaluable in preparing his narration. The approximate number of children attending this test was 3,000.





Setting for CATHERINE THE GREAT : sketch for scene on the opposite page, by Vincent Korda

(London Films)

A report submitted to the L.C.C. giving the results of the experiment, made the following recommendations among others :

1. That the silent film with a narrator was superior to the silent film with captions.
2. That such matinees could not be financed indefinitely from school funds.
3. That an experiment on a larger scale would be useful to test the value of the talkie film compared with the silent film accompanied by a narrator.

A further experiment was held in 1933-34. Twelve matinees have been held and approximately 12,000 children from St. Pancras Schools have attended the performances. This means that practically every child above the age of 10 years has attended the matinees once.

The National Milk Publicity Council came forward and generously financed the experiment. Their film *Bottled Health* was taken for the purpose of the test. It was possible to grade the audiences and to show films which illustrated the curriculum of the schools. The exhibitions were arranged for age groups corresponding to the year of the courses in the junior, senior or central schools. Two matinees were allocated to each age group. At the first of these matinees the film was shown with the "talkie" narration. At the second the teacher narrator accompanied the film. The results are being tabulated for the purpose of preparing a report for submission to the L.C.C.

The head teachers of the schools were circularised and asked to suggest topics from various school subjects which would be suitable for film illustration and bearing on the syllabus for the current term. From the information obtained a viewing committee of head teachers examined and selected films which were most suitable for illustrating the work in the schools. Thus for the central school pupils with a technical bias the film *Contact* was selected.

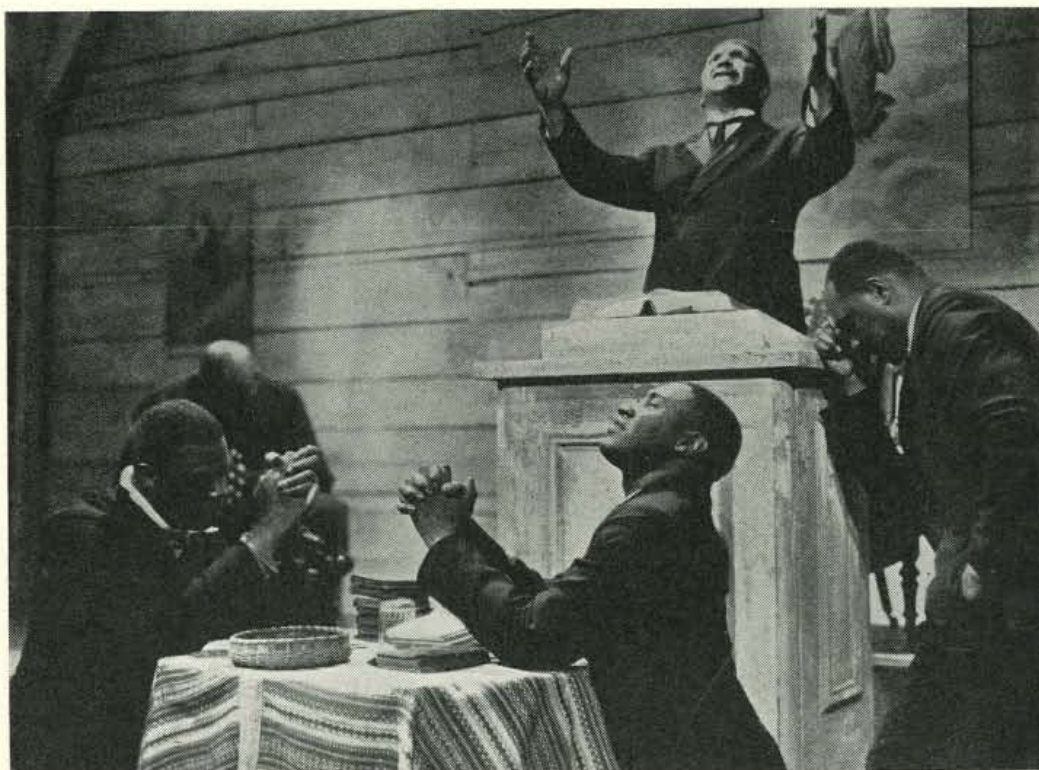
Great interest has been shown in the experiment, and visitors to London from New Zealand, Canada and South Africa have been present at one or more of the matinees.

What of the future? The principle has been accepted and it only needs the funds to extend the St. Pancras scheme to the whole of London. For a comparatively modest sum it would be possible to take 20,000 London elementary school children to the cinemas in their own locality and to show them films which would have educational value and perhaps, more important still, would influence the taste of the future cinema audiences. Moreover they would be going to the "real grown-up cinema" where father and mother and other adults go for their entertainment.

"The influence of the cinema," (to quote *The Film in National Life*), "has already found its way into the schools; and the educator has to choose whether he will leave a powerful force unregulated, to do what harm it may, or whether he will admit it as a controlled but lively instrument." G.D.G.



Paul Robeson, the singer, in *EMPEROR JONES* by Dudley Murphy, from Eugene O'Neill's play. (United Artists)



Britain have to train ourselves to see, to look, to observe thoroughly. We are an excessively literary people, and have been in the past too ready to concentrate on books, instead of learning to use our eyes directly. That is why our artistic taste is on the whole backward, and our art is not as supreme as our literature. But the film gives an opportunity for changing all this. Every intelligent filmgoer can learn to observe; and if you want

to see what this really means, just try, next time you see an interesting film, writing down immediately afterwards your own account of the points of the story. Then go back, and see the film again, and you will be astounded to find what you have missed. But the younger people miss less than the older; and this is where there is hope. The film is making us more eye-conscious as a nation; so that it lies in *your* hands to raise the whole standard of film production and exhibition in the future.

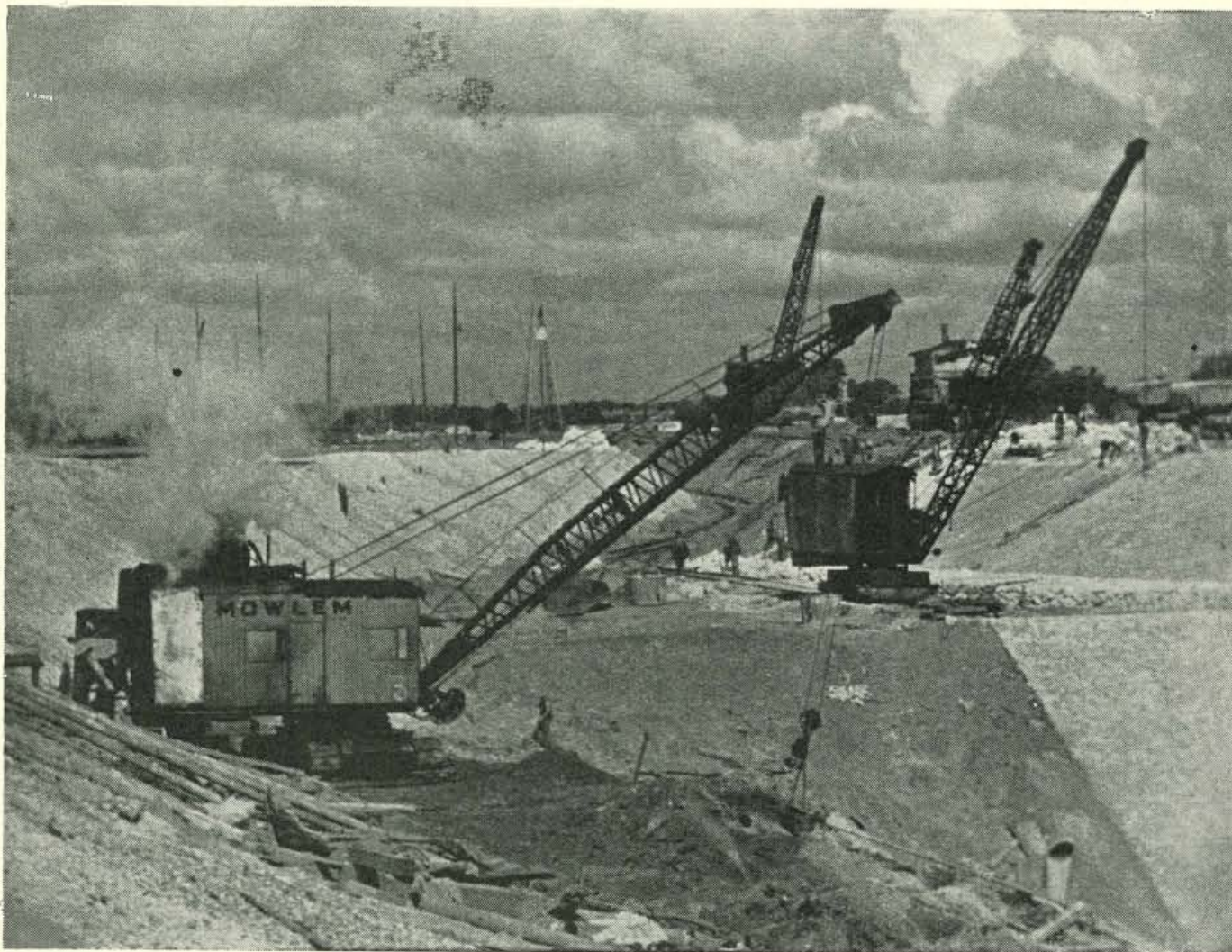
As filmgoers, however, there is even more you can do than I have so far suggested. For the individual to train himself to look at films so as to get the most out of them is good, and the more individuals who do so, the larger will become the intelligent film-going public, and the greater its weight at the box-office. But can we ever expect that the intelligent will be the majority? I am afraid not. As in the theatre, in the newspaper, or the wireless, everywhere, in fact, taste is led by a minority, who appreciate what is new and good before the majority is convinced. In order to make its voice heard, the minority must co-operate—overcoming its disadvantage in numbers by showing itself organised, purposeful and well informed. One of the disheartening features of the cinema to-day is that good films are not supposed to pay. There is even a mistaken belief in some circles that an “unusual” film (such a one, for instance, as *Berkeley Square*) is not likely to be worth showing outside London and the suburbs. Now we know from experience this belief is not true of the drama, or music or of art. Every town all over the country has at least some people who appreciate the “unusual,” the “serious” forms of drama, art and music. The question whether they will get what they want in their own town—a repertory theatre, for instance, or good

art shows or concerts—depends on whether they get together in a capable organisation.

So it is with the film. One of the most interesting things now going on in this country is the formation in various provincial towns of a new type of film society, which aims at bringing together all those who are interested in the film as a satisfying form of entertainment, and making their influence felt in supporting the showing of a better and more unusual type of film at the picturehouses. The ordinary film society in the past has concentrated on arranging private shows for its own members, usually on Sunday evenings, of rare films, often foreign, of special artistic merit—films which would never get into the programme of a commercial picture theatre. But these newer societies—for instance at Liverpool—go to work quite differently. They make friends with those who are engaged in the business of running the local picture houses—the managers and exhibitors—and, having gained their confidence, try to support, by organised publicity among their members and the general public—any films of unusual excellence which they are willing to try out. Often in the past such experiments have proved failures: “You see, the public don’t *want* better films,” say the managers. These societies try to prove that a section of the public—not a negligible section, but one ready to pay its pennies at the box-office—do want and appreciate better films.

There are various ways in which these societies do their work. Good films often lack adequate advertisement. I remember a case where a picture house manager had two films sent down to him—a feature film with Greta Garbo (a not very good love story) and an interesting film of Polar exploration. He told me that he was allowed to spend on advertising the former £50—on advertising the latter 10s. Can you wonder that “interest” films don’t reach





The construction of the new graving dock at Southampton. From Paul Rotha's documentary in production for G.B.I.

the public? Well, these new film societies can help to remedy that. Then there is the question of film criticism. Most people have to rely for their choice of films on what they read in the press. Unfortunately not as many papers as we should like publish film criticism of a discriminating character. Also these criticisms only appear when a film is trade shown, and by the time it is released for general exhibition, months will have passed; so unless we are the kind of people who collect and file newspaper cuttings, we have only rather hazy recollections of what we have read to go upon. But these newer film societies, by viewing films themselves and publishing criticisms of them, can keep their members well informed, and help them to discriminate. They also hold lectures and discussions about the film, organise exhibitions of film "stills," help amateurs to produce their own films, and in other ways try to create a healthy and intelligent public opinion about films generally.

This new movement has received its impetus from the foundation of the British Film Institute in London last October. This body is a very interesting experiment. It is the first time that those who produce, rent, and exhibit films have sat down round the same table as those who are interested in films as members of the general public, to work out a

scheme of concerted action. The British Film Institute exists in order to provide a centre where all kind of information about the film, both on its entertainment and on its serious side, can be had. It gets asked such questions as—what formalities must you go through if you want to import a foreign film into this country—how do you go to work if you want to show films to a private audience—what is the best size or kind of projector to install in a school or a club—when can good films, of a sort not usually shown in public picture-houses, be obtained—and so forth. The Institute is also trying to persuade film producers to make certain films which it thinks ought to be made, and also to give advice how they should be made. It is helping several of the Government Departments which want to use films in various ways. It has started to examine the question of films for native races in our Empire—in Africa, for instance. And above all, it is taking steps to form in all parts of the country those local societies—Film Institute Societies, as they are called (to distinguish them from the older kind of film societies)—to bring together the film trade and the film-going public to find ways whereby more people can see better films at the ordinary picture-house.

There are many schools where local societies of this kind could be formed with excellent results.



In these societies, you could exchange opinions about the films you have seen, organise special visits to local cinemas to see films of particular merit, have visits and talks from persons engaged in film production or film criticism, perhaps even try to make a silent film of your own (it is not so much more difficult or expensive than acting a play). The film certainly has a future before it of which we to-day can only just catch a glimpse. It is capable of being used in science, art, music, religion, politics, education, and government, in ways undreamed of. Ought we not to take time by the forelock, and begin to explore this vast field for ourselves before, not after, it is tilled? I find the film one of the most exciting subjects we have to consider at the present time. Only think of a part that the film has to play—to some degree *is* playing—as an international force; transcending frontiers and helping the people of the world to know each other as never before. Only think of the film as the history of the future—for surely, in twenty or thirty years time, the newsreel and “interest” films which we look at to-day will be to the next generation a priceless treasure of living history—far better than any amount of books. That treasure could be made much richer than it is, if the use of the film were only extended to cover aspects of the nation’s life—its industry, its countryside, its leading men and women and their thoughts, its science and art—aspects which at present the film hardly does justice to. The British film has had a difficult time in the past—our industry, just at its growing stage, was checked and all but killed by the Great War—and we had to take all, or nearly all, of our films from America for over a dozen years. But gradually the lost ground has been recovered, and to-day the British film is again something that counts, not only here, but abroad and through the Empire. It has not yet realised all its possibilities, though it has made a start. To do that, there is one prerequisite—an active, intelligent and enlightened public interest in films. I have tried to suggest to you some of the ways which must be taken to get that interest.

## CHILDREN AND THE CINEMA

### The Value of the Silent Film

IN an address to the North Essex Educational Fellowship at Saffron Walden on March 3, Mr. H. Ramsbotham, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education, referred to the educational value of films in connection with the reorganisation of schools which is proceeding under the Hadow scheme. “We ought,” said Mr. Ramsbotham, “to be thinking very carefully how best to make use of the cinema and the wireless as instruments of teaching. I find it extremely difficult to determine the part that they should play, and I do not profess to have found any definite opinions on the matter. But I think we can consider the educational value of the moving picture under two headings, first as instruction, and secondly as illumination.

“Instruction is perhaps the most obvious use of it and I think that mechanical and scientific processes

can be illustrated by means of the film better than by any text book, and information imparted which it would be difficult to convey as fully or as quickly by any other method.

“But illumination is to my mind more important. None of us have really been taught to use our eyes sufficiently. We have learnt more by reading than by looking and we prefer the written page to the moving thing. But by means of the film we can do a great deal to stimulate the power of visual perception. I only wish that I could have been taught geography with the help of the moving pictures.

“I think it could be equally useful in the teaching of history. Really to understand anything about a by-gone age requires a considerable effort of imagination. To appreciate the importance of great events it is a great assistance to be able to visualise their setting and their background. I feel that a good historical film cannot fail to bring home to the children the significance of the period they are studying. It is bound to make it much more real to see the men and women that they read about playing their parts on the screen before their very eyes.

“I am inclined to think that the silent film is better for the purpose of teaching than the ‘talkie.’ It is likely to be a more satisfactory representation of the time for I think it must be a good deal easier to give a reasonably good picture of the people of a past age than to reproduce accurately their speech and their opinions. So it seems to me to be best for the teacher to be the talkie.

“Of course it will be a considerable time before many of our schools have their own cinemas, but we ought to begin thinking about the methods of employing the film for teaching, for it is already possible, as was done recently in Glasgow, to make use of cinema halls in the morning for the purpose of giving lessons in history to the school children. There must be many places in the country where that could be done and I have no doubt that the new British Film Institute would give its advice and assistance in that direction.

“I am not going to say anything about the effect of the cinema generally upon children. Some people are very much disturbed by its possible influence; and there are certainly a good many films which have no educational value whatever. But on the whole I think the children take very little harm from the ‘pictures,’ and when I hear gloomy forebodings of the dire result that may be anticipated when boys and girls go to see a ‘gangster’ film I remember that the same sort of forebodings were uttered by Dr. Johnson about ‘The Beggars’ Opera,’ though he confessed that he did not believe that any man was ever made a rogue by being present at its representation.”

Mr. Ramsbotham ended by pointing out that “whatever we conclude the place of the cinema and broadcasting to be in our educational system we can say with confidence that they can never take the place of the teacher. No mechanical device or artifice can supplant the personal contact, the influence of one human being upon another.”



# SPECIALISED CINEMA OR FILM SOCIETY?

By Eric Hakim

THERE was once an editor of my acquaintance who, for reasons which do not matter, continued to draw his salary and to perform his professional services long after his paper had ceased publication. Every Monday he conscientiously schemed and commissioned articles. During the week, with exemplary industry he wrote or "subbed" other persons' writings. On Friday he most systematically put all this copy in an envelope—and dropped it into the drawer of his desk!

It sometimes seems to me that there is a danger of this mentality developing among advocates of the "superior" film. Emphasis upon production aspects in the journalism of the subject, a fatalistic acceptance of the belief that most worth-while films cannot obtain commercial exhibition, pleasure in the fact that "we" can see them through a film society—all this tends to forgetfulness of the elementary truth that public exhibition is the goal, and ultimately the only justification, of every film production of a general character.

The existence and rapid growth of so many film societies in this country is an indictment of the nabobs of Wardour Street, directed to their commercial ability no less than to their taste. It exposes once again the crass underestimate of public appreciation which is the keynote of commercialised entertainment. So far, good. Every society is a protest against certain elements of cinema programmes and a proclamation in favour of elements omitted. But Film Society exhibition is not public exhibition in the sense in which I understand the term. It is exhibition exclusively to a (very valuable) insurgent minority. The point I would like SIGHT AND SOUND readers to consider is this: how far does this minority, just because it is compact and organised, cease to be a rebellious element and become a separate community, leaving to the commercial cinema the public which, more or less, justifies its low standard of values?

I know, of course, that individual members patronise ordinary cinemas and that the Societies are doing valuable educative work; that they are gradually creating a community whose needs may ultimately compel attention from Wardour Street. The point is that they are working outside the commercial cinema and there is a danger, I think, that many of their members may content themselves with the selected fare which the Society provides. To that extent they cease to be an influence making for the improvement in the general level of programmes which is one of the main objects of the Film Institute.

Before I attempt to answer the important question whether the film society protest cannot be made effectively *within* the commercial cinema, let me expose frankly the axe which I have to grind. I

am trying to make profits by the exhibition of what we have called, for want of a better term, "Unusual Films," in cinemas exclusively devoted to such subjects. Almost—in fact, I think I can say absolutely—without exception these films are of the type shown by Film Societies. Both of our theatres the Academy, Leeds, and the Prince of Wales', Liverpool—are already commercial successes. Shall I seem ungrateful to the considerable proportion of Film Society members in our audience, or simply egoistic, in suggesting that this fact is really of greater moment to the better film movement than half-a-dozen exhibitions of the same film under Society conditions?

My point, is, of course, that a large percentage of our patrons are not members of a film society. We are preaching to the unconverted and, by making profits, proving the point which, I take it, the societies are also out to demonstrate, that there *is* a public for high class films (even films in foreign languages, and even silent films) which the trade hastily labels "uncommercial." They are so far from being so, by the way, that we find it possible to run them for a fortnight as a minimum in theatres which played ordinary features for three days only.

It is, I think, of equal importance that we are demonstrating, not merely the existence of a public anxious to see unusual films, but the fact that there are enough of the right type of films for this public to see. This is, I know, a point about which grave doubts are felt, but we would not have engaged in our own enterprise had we not had good reasons to believe these doubts to be unfounded. At the present moment there are in existence in England enough "quality" films to guarantee the programme material of an unusual films theatre for a year ahead, and the prospect of a future supply, which can easily become regular and dependable, if the Government recognises that this type of film is very severely penalised by provisions of the Films Act which were actually intended to apply to quite another type of production.

There is frequently talk of a shortage of unusual films, when what is actually meant is a scarcity of such films available for British exhibition. This is directly due to the Films Act provision demanding the registration of each film by a renting concern. Every registration increases the renter's British Quota obligation and it will be readily seen that it is bad business for a renter to register an "unusual" film, for which he may expect perhaps only six bookings, on a single copy, rather than a commercial film which may demand thirty copies and secure 1,000 bookings. The Quota obligation, in the case of an unusual film may be easily, in a strictly cash sense, from one hundred to five hundred times greater in the one case than in the other.



# FILMS IN MEDICAL EDUCATION

By L. W. Harrison, D.S.O., M.B., F.R.C.P.E.

Some of the special problems in medical cinematography are described by Colonel Harrison, whose personal experience of the use of films in conjunction with lectures extends over thirteen years. Colonel Harrison is Director of the Venereal Disease Department at St. Thomas's Hospital.

**I**T seems regrettable that instructors in the different branches of medicine make comparatively little use of cinematography for class teaching, because I am sure that in neglecting it they are depriving themselves and their students of an invaluable aid to learning. The little use that is made of films in this branch of instruction appears the more regrettable when we consider that, almost yearly, the medical curriculum grows more crowded, and speed of instruction increasingly important, while nobody with experience of the use of films will deny that he can convey more in an hour with their help than in double the time without it.

Many operations and manipulations in medicine are carried out so quickly that even the few students in the front row cannot analyse them, and those in less favourable positions might just as well not be present for any advantage they derive from the spectacle. With the film such operations can be shown equally well to every member of the class and,

supplemented by verbal explanation or by caption, the important points can be driven home in a way that is impossible by any other medium.

My experience in the preparation and use of films in teaching began in 1921, when I collaborated with Community Service Ltd. in making an eight-reel one on gonorrhœa in the male, for use by the British Social Hygiene Council in the education of practitioners and students; a few years later we prepared an eleven-reel film on syphilis. At the commencement my only qualifications for the task were a fairly long experience of the subject of the film, and a very great enthusiasm for teaching it to others. I knew nothing of the technique of cinematography and had only vague ideas as to what was practicable and what impracticable.

In both films the instruction is conveyed by representation of living subjects and by moving diagrams. In the film on gonorrhœa all the photography was carried out in the firm's studio; in that on syphilis a temporary studio was fitted up for photography of the living subject in the V.D. Department at St. Thomas's Hospital. This method had the advantage that the patient could be photographed before he had time to change his mind; it had the disadvantage



Scene from CATHERINE THE GREAT, by Alexander Korda (London Films)



that a room normally used for other purposes was encumbered for a number of months with illuminating apparatus which, moreover, lay idle sometimes for weeks together whilst we waited for suitable cases. The experience inclines me to think that a central studio which could be used by all teaching hospitals would be the most economical. Such a studio would have the advantage that it would gradually collect in one place films of far more types of case than occur in the experience of one department of a hospital in the comparatively limited period of time spent in the compilation of a film, and, by arrangement, these could be drawn on by different authors in compiling their own films.

The moving diagrams presented many difficulties. We considered two methods, cartoons such as I think have been used for "Felix the Cat" and its successors, and painting the changes under the camera. Cartoons were ruled out as likely to prove too expensive; economy was a vital consideration as we were working with the help of a Government Grant, and the expense of preparing the films would not be offset by any box-office receipts. As the diagrams were made by painting in the changes of position gradually (about one quarter-inch for each two pictures), it was necessary for me to instruct the artist very carefully not only in the design of the commencing picture but the ultimate goal. Although the artist was astonishingly good at grasping my ideas, I found it necessary to be present at every stage in the construction and to concentrate very closely on the growth of each diagram lest it stray from the main idea. For this reason I think that cartoons would have been better, because by this means the author can be freed for other work during the actual drawing of the diagrams and can, moreover, make corrections before the photography commences. It seems possible, too, that by using cartoons, which could be filed, any modifications dictated later could be introduced when the time came to bring the film up to date. Certainly if I had to produce these films again, I would insist on the use of cartoons in some of the diagrams; the making of one illustrating the bursting of an abscess and of another showing the withering of brain cells in general paresis, both of them quite effective screen pictures, was to me a very trying and anxious experience.

In the film on Syphilis we took about a thousand feet showing the causal organism, *Spirochaeta pallida*, in the living state, and in this had the invaluable assistance of Mr. Ogilvy of Messrs. Leitz, who lent the apparatus, arranged the microscope and showed us the technique of getting the image on to the focussing screen of the camera. *Spirochaeta pallida* must be one of the most difficult subjects for cinematomicrography; it is a very delicate spiral organism which reflects very little light, requires for its demonstration an oil-immersion objective, with very careful adjustment of the sub-stage condenser and has a most annoying trick of sinking or rising out of focus however thin one has made the film of liquid in which it moves. I tried at first keeping it in focus whilst watching it through an eye-piece on the periscope principle,

but found that this did not help matters and in the end confined myself to keeping the germs in the microscope field while the camera-man turned at half speed.

I think that both films have proved reasonably successful. They are now out of date in certain particulars, and, so far as I can see, there is no prospect of facilities becoming available for revising them, but such a central studio as has been suggested above would meet the difficulty admirably. When using them myself, as I do throughout every winter, I try to make up for their deficiencies by remarks as they are being shown.

In the use of these films for instructional purposes I have tried various methods, including a straight showing after a preliminary talk, an explanation of each reel immediately before its appearance, and lastly the use of a projector which can be stopped at any moment, leaving the picture on the screen. I believe this to be by far the best for intimate class teaching, and have employed it for a number of years in my course of lecture-demonstrations at St. Thomas's Hospital. At ordinary speed of showing without stops, the movement is far too rapid to enable the student to grasp the important points in a given manipulation, and the lecturer has little or no opportunity of emphasising them. When the projector can be stopped the lecturer can draw attention to the position of the hands, the method of handling the instrument and in fact any stage of a given operation in a way that I believe would be impossible by any other method, not excepting the slow-motion picture. I show only one reel at a session, and the demonstration occupies about half-an-hour, so that in my explanation I must talk for about half that time. Assuming that the use of a projector which can be stopped at any instant is considered the best for routine teaching, it follows that there is no point in constructing an elaborate projector-room since the machine must be in the lecture-room so that the operator can co-operate as closely as possible with the lecturer.

The question of using "talkies" for teaching often arises. I should judge that they would not be generally so useful for routine class work as is the silent film with a projector which can be stopped to allow the lecturer to speak. The "talkie" expresses the views of only one man; it thrusts into the background the teacher on the spot, and he may not agree with everything the author of the "talkie" says.

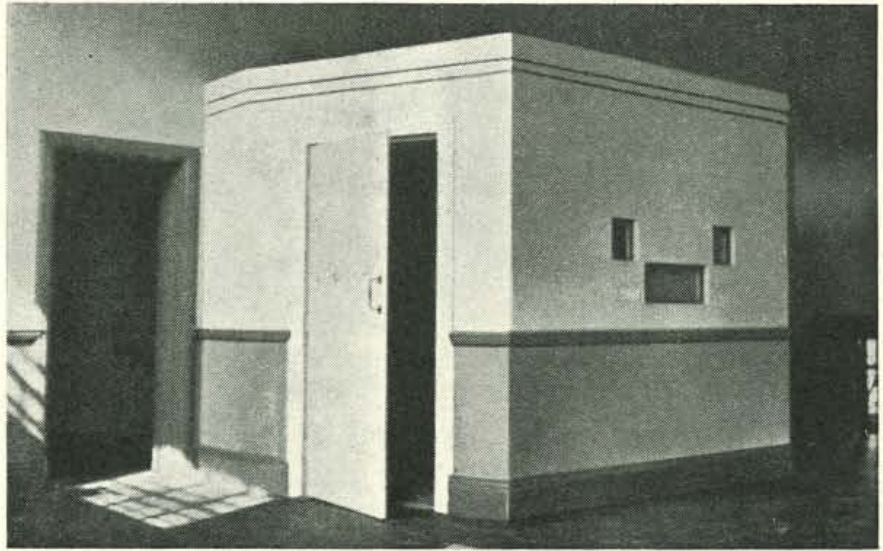
I trust that this account of a personal experience in the use of films for medical education may encourage others to try them. Judging by the numbers who attend my own demonstrations, I should say that students highly appreciate this method of instruction. Many practitioners after seeing one of these films have exclaimed at the good fortune of present-day students in having instruction given to them in such an attractive form. They forget perhaps that very few subjects are taught in this way and that the load of learning which the medical student of to-day is expected to carry to the examination table must be well-nigh intolerable, so that they are entitled to every assistance their teachers can give them.



# SIGHT AND SOUND IN A MODERN SCHOOL

By Frederic Evans

A description by the Chief Education Officer of Erith, Kent, of the provisions made for modern aids to learning in the new Northumberland Heath Senior School. On the right is the fireproof projection house on the cinema stage in the school hall.



It may be of interest to readers of SIGHT AND SOUND if a description be given of the provisions made in a modern senior school for the use of films, lantern slides, microscopic slides and pictures, as illustrative material. The school in question is the Northumberland Heath Senior School at Erith, to which a brief reference was made in the last issue of this periodical, and at which a deliberate attempt has been made to prepare for or provide



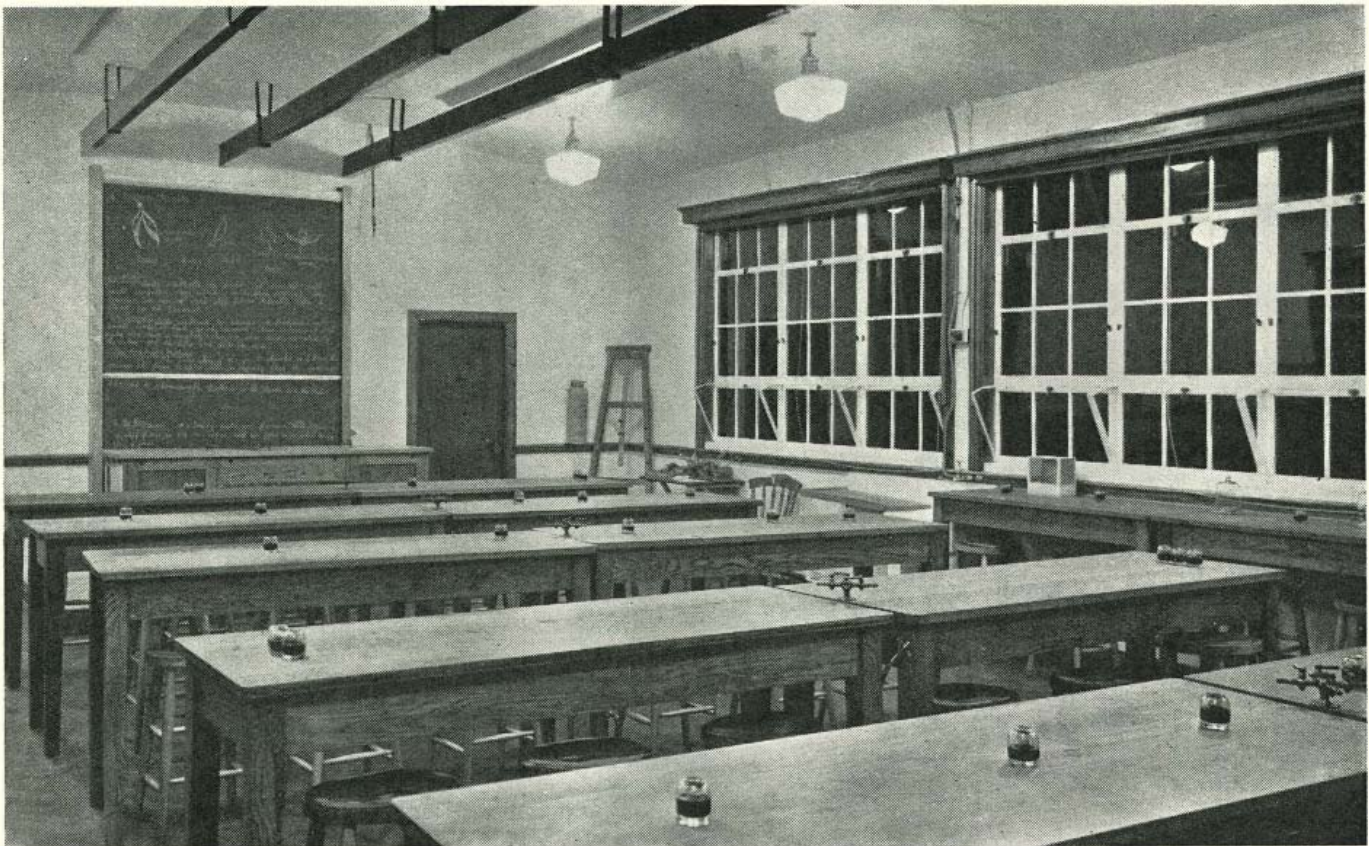
modern apparatus using sight and sound as aids to the teaching.

The problem regarding displays of illustrative pictures divided itself naturally into two sections. The first was the provision of rooms in which films or slides could be displayed during the day, and second, the type of apparatus used for such displays. It was decided, when the school was planned, to equip the school hall with light proof blinds and curtains to the windows so that it could be darkened both for dramatic performances and also lantern and film displays. A projection house of fireproof construction was therefore built at one end of the hall in such a manner as to make it possible to show slides or films to a class of children, and also, by using lenses of different focal length, in half the hall to an audience of three or four hundred people.

The school was fortunate in being presented with an almost brand new standard-size Gaumont British silent projector, and this was installed in the projection house; a rewinding place being provided in the basement under the stage. A rotary convertor was fitted under the projection house in the basement to change A.C. to D.C. and so suit the arc projection lamp. The projector is made to show both films and lantern slides, so that for a class demonstration or for a film display or lantern lecture to a reasonably large audience the installation is most suitable.

It is, in my view, probable that for school purposes the silent film will prove to be the most suitable. I think this for certain definite reasons. First, there is already enough talk in schools. Teachers talk too much as a rule, and so a talking picture is by no means an unmixed blessing. The film is illustrative material of what the teacher should have taught or is teaching. It is the teacher's place to use the illustration and to talk about it. This makes his part an essential and active one; so that, educationally, the silent film used as illustrative material by a competent teacher will probably leave





THE SCIENCE ROOM at Northumberland Heath, showing blind fittings for darkening

(By courtesy of G.E.C., Ltd.)

a deeper and more accurate impression than when lesson and illustrations have both been simultaneously mechanically reproduced. This is not to say that I do not consider that talking films have a place in schools—for exceptional purposes they are no doubt valuable—but if the film is illustrative material then a silent film properly used is quite adequate. There is another argument for silent films in schools, and that is that they will not and need not suffer competition with the talkies, which are the modern box-office attractions in the theatres. Silent films are honest to goodness illustrations of lessons and nothing more; their “film show” character will therefore go and their scientific use to illustrate lessons will emerge.

Other classrooms constructed so that they could be darkened were the Science Rooms, the Art Rooms and the Geography Rooms. The Science Rooms were fitted with patent revolving “black-boards”; one section being painted white for use as a lantern screen or screen upon which microscopic slides can be projected by a micro-projector. This system of showing microscopic slides is economical and excellent when demonstrations are given. It can eliminate the need for a number of expensive microscopes from science rooms in senior schools.

Instead of an epidiascope, a separate optical lantern for slides and an episcope for projecting pictures have been supplied to the school. This method enables the instruments to be either used jointly in one room or separately in different rooms at one and the same time, and is also less expensive than the cost of high grade epidiascopes.

Suitable electrical plug points and portable screens are available for the classrooms which can be darkened, and these will also suit small portable sub-standard film projectors when they are obtained later on. Thus facilities have been provided in the school for the projection of silent standard film, lantern slides, small pictures and microscopic slides, these facilities being suitably distributed amongst the halls and the specialised classrooms.

As to the organisation of this illustrative work, a joint film committee from the staffs of the boys’ and girls’ departments is at present working to collect information as to films and slides suitable for use in illustrating the various syllabuses, which are being co-ordinated, so that classes can be conveniently combined when the films, in particular, are being shown. The organisation has yet to be perfected, but at any rate preliminary provision has been made to enable definite developments to take place in the use of this kind of illustrative material in the school.

A new company, known as Science Films, has been formed with studios at 27 Clareville Grove, London, S.W.7. Its object is to provide a specialised unit for the production of educational and demonstration films of a purely scientific kind, and the equipment includes apparatus for micro-cinematography and electrically-controlled cameras functioning through a very wide range of speeds. An interesting and significant point is that the unit intends to extend its activities beyond laboratory work to practical demonstrations of the application of scientific principles in nature and industry.



# WHAT THE BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE IS DOING

## WORK OF THE QUARTER

SINCE the last issue of SIGHT AND SOUND the Privy Council has made a grant of £5,000 from the Cinematograph Fund to the British Film Institute. The Institute is now therefore assured of financial backing in carrying out the functions for which it was created.

The work has increased rapidly. The enquiries that have been flowing in daily cover a wide variety of subjects, and it is clear that the formation of a research department and information bureau is one of the most important services which the Institute can render to the general public, to its members and to educational and social service organisations of all kinds. With this object in view material from all sources is being collected with reference to apparatus and films of every kind, educational needs, planned investigations, enquiries and experiments conducted under the auspices of local Education authorities and other educational bodies. This material will form the basis of the information service which is so urgently required. Thus the Institute is endeavouring at one and the same time to build up this department and to cover the work with which the latter will deal when fully established.

### Branches of the Institute in the Provinces

The expansion of the work of the Institute is not only due to the increase in the number of its correspondents as its aims and objects become more generally known, but may also be attributed to the growing activity in the provinces as well as in Scotland and Northern Ireland. Since the last number of SIGHT AND SOUND the Merseyside Film Institute Society has adopted a recommendation that the Society shall be reconstituted as a branch of the Institute, and meetings and conferences to consider the possibility of forming branches in the areas concerned have recently been held at Brighton, Bradford and Belfast. A special pamphlet has been printed to suggest to interested groups the lines to follow in establishing branches, and to indicate the work which such branches can undertake in order to forward the general objects of the Institute.

The individual membership of the Institute is steadily increasing, and includes persons engaged in all types of education or interested in one or other branch of cinematography—amateur cinematography, production, etc., and others of the general public who believe in the potentialities of the cinema as a means of entertainment and instruction.

The first meeting of the Institute's Advisory Council took place at Chaucer House on Thursday, February 1st, 1934, when Colonel John Buchan, C.H., M.P., was in the chair. The service which the Council could render to the Institute was outlined, and the formation of certain advisory panels was agreed upon. Further particulars of the Council are given on another page.

The Institute has published its first Bulletin of films which will in future be issued monthly. In the educational section the films have been viewed by experts in their particular subjects, and classified and annotated for the benefit of teachers and lecturers. In the past teachers have had no reliable information as to the types of film available on the market, and they have been definitely handicapped in their work on this account. The Bulletin is designed to fill this need, and the appointment of a representative educational film panel by the Institute ensures that the reports in the Bulletin will be reliable.

### Information to Members

The Institute includes in its Bulletin notes on entertainment as well as educational films. These are viewed by a voluntary panel of interested film-goers, who by this means make known to their fellow members their views of films likely to be of general interest. The Institute aims at supplying to its members and branches information which will lead its members to take a more informed interest in the cinema, and in their turn to give expression to their own views.

The Institute proposes also to issue a monthly News Letter which will contain notes of developments abroad as well as in this country. In this way it is hoped to link up the various movements in cinematography abroad with the work of the Institute and its associated bodies. This News Letter will be circulated to members and branches who will be invited to send in to headquarters all items of local news which would be of general interest. Thus this News Letter will not make it possible to maintain contact with other countries, but will provide a channel of information which will enable the various parts of the movement in this country to keep in touch with one another, and to understand the general trend of development.

### Conferences and Exhibitions

The International Institute of Educational Cinematography at Rome, the body charged by the League of Nations with the duty of studying and exploring the educational possibilities of the cinema is working in close association with the Institute in arranging certain international conferences and exhibitions. A conference is being held from April 19-25th, 1934, in Rome to discuss various aspects of educational cinematography. At the request of the International Institute and with the approval of the Board of Education, invitations to Associations to participate in the conference were conveyed through the British Film Institute. The scope of the conference is described elsewhere in this issue.



The British Film Institute in conjunction with the International Institute is in addition making arrangements for an international exhibition of educational cinematography to take place in London, and this will be held in association with the Institute's inaugural dinner on May 9th. The finest examples of the film used as an instrument of education are being collected from various countries for this exhibition which will be the first of a series of such exhibitions to be organised in the capitals of Europe.

Among its other activities the Institute is arranging an exhibition of educational films and apparatus in connection with the new Education Fellowship's Conference in Cape Town (2nd-13th July) and Johannesburg (16th-27th July). Mr. G. T. Hankin, of the Board of Education, is speaking on "The New Aids to Learning," (wireless and the film) and it is in association with his address that the exhibition is being organised.

A summer school or week-end conference will be held this year at which demonstrations in the use of the film in the classroom will be given and various aspects of the cinema discussed. Educational, cultural and scientific associations of all kinds will be invited to send representatives, and the Institute will welcome suggestions from those interested in this project.

## THE ADVISORY COUNCIL GENERAL MEETING OF THE FILM INSTITUTE'S HELPERS

At the first meeting of the advisory council, Colonel J. Buchan, in the chair, gave some indication of the work before its members, and of its value to the Institute. "The whole essence of our work," he said, "is that we are perfectly disinterested and independent. Our business is to keep in touch with every aspect of national life, but to be under the domination of no one. That is why this Advisory Council is a vital part of our mechanism, for you represent practically every interest in the nation to-day. It is through you and your Committees that the chief work of the Institute will be done. On you will depend the determination of our policy. Our success depends upon keeping in close touch with every aspect of informed popular opinion, and in this you are our chief medium."

### Formation of the Film Institute

Mr. T. Ormiston then gave the council a brief summary of the events which led up to the formation of the British Film Institute, following the publication of the report of the Commission on Educational and Cultural Films.

"The main recommendation of the Commission's report, the *Film in National Life*, was that a national Film Institute should be appointed and that an effort should be made to obtain a Royal Charter for such a body. Just about the same time as the Report was issued, Parliament was considering what was to be done about the Sunday opening of cinemas. While the Act was going through Parliament,

provision was made in it that a donation should be made to charity by any cinemas opening on Sunday. The Commission was in the public eye, and it seemed a good opportunity to secure some of the money for the development of the film as a means of entertainment and education. Accordingly in the Bill, provision was made for the setting up of a Cinematograph Fund comprising 5 per cent. of the contributions made to charity. The fund which was under the control of the Privy Council was to encourage the use and development of the cinematograph as a means of entertainment and instruction.

"Those who had drawn up the Report met the representatives of all sections of the cinematograph trade, and they considered together ways and means of best applying the money from the Cinematograph Fund. At the time I was one of those who were doubtful about the aims and objects of the Commission, and we had some very hard fights across the table as to whether they were on the right lines or not. But ultimately agreement was reached that there was scope in this country for a national Film Institute that would encourage the use and development of the cinematograph as a means of entertainment and instruction.

### The Institute and the Trade

"How was the Institute to be controlled? It was necessary that there should be some representation of the trade to guide the Institute as to the mechanism of the trade; it was agreed, too, that as the Commission on Educational and Cultural Films had investigated the whole field and brought out its Report it also should have representation, while in addition public interests could not be overlooked. So the Governing Body of the Institute is formed on a tri-partite basis having upon it three representatives of education, three members representing public interests and three representing the trade. The Articles of Association were approved by the various Government Departments, and we are privileged to have His Grace the Duke of Sutherland as Chairman.

"We have agreed that there shall be no interference on the part of the Institute in trade matters, that is to say in the running of the film business for public entertainment. Nor will the Institute play any part in the censorship of films. Its main function is propaganda for the better type of films. In addition there is great scope for the manufacture of 'educational' films in the broadest sense of the term.

"With regard to entertainment films, we hope that we may be able to improve the general level and quality, just as the dramatic associations help to improve the drama."

Mr. Ormiston then referred to the Cinematograph Act of 1927, which was the outcome of a conference at which the trade agreed upon a policy for the encouragement of British films. While the British Film Institute would not confine its activities solely to British films, it hoped to take its share in their development.

"The film is a tremendous influence in the lives of the people, particularly in small districts. It is also the greatest counter-attraction known to the



public house, but it is not sufficiently developed on the scientific and educational side. We intend to devote our energies to this side. . . . We want the Advisory Council to help the Institute to carry out its responsibilities, and we hope that we shall have your encouragement and support."

### The Film Institute's Programme

The work already begun by the Institute was described by Mr. R. S. Lambert, who placed before the meeting the suggestions of the Governors for the co-operation of the advisory Council.

"The whole of this work," he said, "is in the early and informal stage. Nothing or very little is as yet cut and dried, and you will not expect to be presented with cast-iron formulas for what you might or might not do. If the outline is not complete that is because we are anxious to secure your whole-hearted confidence and co-operation, and you should realise the great importance we attach to recommendations and suggestions which come from you to meet any which we make from our side.

"The Cinematograph Fund was established in 1932, whereas the Film Institute was not established till October, 1933. In the clause which constituted the Cinematograph Fund no reference was made by name to the Film Institute; and so when the Film Institute was set up last October it was not automatically certain that the Film Institute would receive the large and generous share of the Fund which Mr. Buchan has announced it is to receive. It follows that the Institute at the outset was bound to prove itself to some extent, and the policy which has been pursued has been one of starting as much useful work as could be initiated in such a short period in order that it might be made clear that this Institute was not merely an unnecessary and ornamental body called into being to please the whim of a few people, but intended to go to work steadily, but effectively.

### Three Months' Activities

"What have we done? We have published in SIGHT AND SOUND a summary of the first three months' activities. I believe whoever reads that brief summary must, if he is a man of the world, admit that no new body established on a semi-official basis could have got to work more quickly or covered more useful ground. The work is of two sorts: the first is that which relates to the establishment of machinery, the appointment of staff, opening of offices, the initiation of a membership system, the commencement of establishment of branches in the provinces. Secondly, the Institute is attempting to make a start on certain pieces of work which exemplify the general aims and functions set out in the leaflet on aims and objects. For instance, the Institute has already commenced to give advice and guidance to those producing firms which apply to it for guidance in the production of educational films. One of the most important firms in the country has already approached the Film Institute and invited its expert assistance in the making of a programme of educational films. This

Mr. J. W. Brown,  
General Manager of the  
British Film Institute



should be distinguished from the function we did not set out to perform, namely to produce films ourselves. The Institute is not a producing body, but one of its prime functions is to offer expert guidance to those in the trade who are producing films.

"We have commenced to give the public an authoritative service of advice on all matters connected with educational and serious film in all its branches. A large flow of enquiries is reaching the Secretary of the Institute relating to legal and technical questions, information with regard to methods of improving films, film societies' work, questions concerning entertainment tax on private performances, and so on.

"Then there is the establishment of some sort of reference collection of films of permanent value, and this raises technical questions of storage. There our Institute has secured the co-operation of the British Kinematograph Society which is the principal trade society expert in technical matters.

"This seems a record for an infant organisation of which we have no reason not to feel proud.

### Constitution and Organisation

"Now, what do we wish this Council to do? What help are we expecting them to give in this matter? In a general way I should begin by mentioning that this Council is formed mainly of representatives sent by various organisations, but it also includes a number of individuals who could not be brought into this Council as representatives of any organisation, but who had some particular qualifications which we felt should be valuable in the development of this work; so the Council consists partly of representatives and partly of individuals. You will be asked to consider whether you will require additional names, and such an extension of names can take place at a future date.

"The machinery which we ask you to work is on these lines:—The Institute proposes to appoint or nominate subsequent to this meeting a Chairman to preside over the Advisory Council who will be a person of weight and eminence. In so far as clerical work is concerned the Institute places its own staff at the disposal of the Council. This body will not need to be called together more than two or three times, say, in a year except in an emergency. But this does not imply that it is just a glorified conference. The Council will best work through a number of smaller panels created from its membership, and these will deal with special aspects of the





Mr. R. V. Crow,  
Secretary of the British  
Film Institute

use of the film and report to the Governing Body of the Institute.

"The general function of the Council shall be to advise the Governors of the Film Institute on all matters concerned with the development of the film as a means of entertainment and instruction as come

within the scope of the Articles of Association of the Film Institute. More specifically we suggest six functions with which the Council should concern itself :

"1. Indicating what films are required for educational purposes. We shall call upon this Council to supply the Institute with the necessary experts who are to collaborate with the film trade in the making of educational films.

"2. Secondly, we shall invite this Council to enquire into the use of the film for scientific, social and cultural purposes generally.

"3. Encouraging the development of the entertainment film of special merit, thereby securing the support of that section of the general public hitherto not vitally interested in the cinema. The Institute does not mean that it wishes to concern itself with the entertainment film as a whole. There is a great proportion of entertainment films which are of little significance to this Institute. We propose to concentrate our efforts upon encouraging those entertainment films which have some unusual merit about them, those which we think may not receive the backing from the public which they deserve.

"4. Promoting the use of films for cultural purposes in the Dominions and Colonies.

"5. Then there is the whole question of technical problems upon which expert advice is needed.

"6. Then we invite this Council to collaborate with us in making recommendations for extending the scope and membership of this Institute.

"The question of panels is one on which we want you to express your views. It is not easy to say what sort of panels they should be. Should they be panels on the basis of the technique of the film itself, production, distribution, technical problems connected with educational and cultural films, or should they be subject panels connected with science, art, music? This matter will gradually be settled by Conference between this Council and the Governors of the Institute. But we suggest that certain panels might be formed immediately, because there is urgent work waiting for them to begin upon. We think there should be an Education Panel composed of those persons specially interested in the educational films, whether for schools, children or

young persons. In this connection there is the special problem of the use of the film among unemployed children from 14 to 18 years of age—the Council should have some sort of policy upon this. There is also the adult side of education, and there is the whole question of the possible use of the film educationally for the unemployed in those centres where educational work is being taken up. Secondly we should have a panel dealing with international aspects of the film. This Institute has established contacts with the Rome Institute, and through this body is already gaining a good deal of knowledge of educational and cultural films being produced and shown in other countries.

#### Advice for Dominions and Colonies

"On the question of the Dominions and Colonies, we have a specific piece of work to be laid before a panel at once. The other day a request reached the Institute for assistance in preparing and supplying a film programme and apparatus for a very important international educational conference which is to be held in South Africa during this Summer. Mr. Hankin is going out to South Africa as a "missionary" (if I may use the term) for the new methods of education—broadcasting and the film. He is to address this Conference and is to begin to spread in South Africa the work of making use of the educational and cultural film. He is being released by the Board of Education for this work, and he has appealed to the British Film Institute for help in providing the right sort of films and apparatus to start this work in South Africa.

"A panel on Public Health and Medicine can also find work to hand. A request has been received from the Rome Institute which concerns the development of the film in medicine and public health. The suggestion is for the compilation of a complete international catalogue of films capable of being used for medical work and health propaganda.

"There should be a panel too for scientific research; and also one for Social Service which would concern itself with the film as an instrument to be used by organisations engaged in social service.

"We shall require the panels to look at films. We require expert help to view and assess films in order that the Film Institute may say whether they fulfil the claims they set out to fulfil. We are therefore going to invite this Council to provide machinery for viewing this kind of film and thus enable us to publish in a monthly bulletin a reasoned appraisal of such films. By criticism we do not mean condemnation. We shall condemn by silence. This Institute is not out to censor, but to give backing and encouragement to what is good and sound, and to make suggestions."

Among those who took part in the general discussion were Professor Myers, O.B.E., Association for the Advancement of Science; Mr. Hobley, Zoological Society; Professor Taylor, Geographical Society; Mr. Penlington, N.U.T.; Mr. Ring, N.U.T.; Mr. Blackwood, Educational Institute of Scotland; Mrs. Neville Rolfe, British Social Hygiene Council; Mr. K. Barnes, Royal Academy of Arts; Mr. G. T. Hankin, Historical Association; Mr. Wood, Board of Education; Sir Percy Jackson; Mr. G. Whitworth, British Drama League; Mr. Bruce Woolfe, G.B. Instructional, and Mr. John Grierson, G.P.O. Film Unit.



# NEWS FROM FILM SOCIETIES

## BRIGHTON & HOVE FILM INSTITUTE SOCIETY

**A** BRANCH of the British Film Institute for Brighton, Hove and district was formed at a well-attended meeting held at the Royal Pavilion, Brighton, on March 3rd., under the chairmanship of Lady Levita, of Hove, a Governor of the Institute who was supported by Mr. F. Herbert Toyne, Mr. A. C. Cameron (a Governor of the Film Institute) and Mr. H. B. Millar (Vice-Chairman of the Sussex Branch of the Cinematograph Exhibitors' Association). The meeting was largely representative of religious, educational and social welfare movements, and the local cinemas.

The Chairman explained that the British Film Institute has been created to encourage the use and development of the cinematograph as a means of entertainment and instruction, and in order to make its work effective the Institute must have the backing of a large volume of public opinion. Those who were interested in cinematography from an educational point of view realized that this wonderful invention was still only in its infancy. "Those who, like myself, receive so much pleasure from the cinema as an entertainment, are not always entirely satisfied with the programmes they find," said Lady Levita. Now, for the first time in this country, the Film Institute aimed at giving public opinion an opportunity of becoming articulate on the matter—and not as a voice crying in the wilderness, but directly to producers of films.

Mr. Toyne said the Institute did not wish to advocate any particular judgment, either social or political. They wanted so to organise public opinion that it would be neither biased nor vitiated by extraneous reasons. He believed there was a very large potential demand for a type of film which was not at present made in any great quantity. The best forms of technique would be used to their full advantage, and all forms of drama, farce and burlesque treated in their best phases. There was no question of prohibition, censorship or licensing, but the creation of a healthy body of opinion for the promotion of all that was best in the common interest.

Mr. Cameron said they wanted more people to realise what a great force the cinema had become in the national life, and to utilize that force better in the interests of two sets of people—those who wanted to see better entertainment and those who wanted to see the film more widely used as a means of education in the broadest sense. "We have a film-minded generation growing up," he said, "and we must take advantage of their knowledge and interest in the new medium to use it for educational purposes." The Film Institute had received State recognition by a grant of £5,000 to be used by the Privy Council to promote the development of the film as a means of entertainment and instruction. He welcomed at that meeting prominent representatives of the cinema industry, because he believed that originally they regarded the Film Institute with some suspicion, but now he was happy to say the whole of the technical resources of the trade were mobilized behind the point of view which the Institute embraced.

Mr. Millar said that the Institute would be a sort of clearing house for criticism, and the trade would welcome it, provided it was not merely destructive.

In the discussion which followed, Miss Basden, Hon. Secretary of the local Branch of the National Council of Women, expressed the opinion that in every large town there should be a pioneer cinema where the demand for something better than they had yet seen might be encouraged.

Alderman H. Cane, J.P., expressed the hope that something would be done to influence public opinion in favour of the introduction of the cinema into schools, and Mr. A. E. Tyrer (Warden of the Brighton Boys' Club) suggested that steps should be taken to rope into the activities of the Institute representatives from poorer districts so that their point of view could be considered.

After further discussion, Mr. W. A. Barron (Headmaster of the Brighton and Hove and Sussex Grammar School) proposed that a Branch of the Film Institute be formed for Brighton, Hove, and district. The motion was seconded by the Vicar of Brighton (Canon A. C. W. Rose) and carried unanimously.

## BRADFORD FILM INSTITUTE SOCIETY

A meeting was held at the Y.M.C.A. headquarters at Bradford, on March 2nd to consider the formation of a local branch of the British Film Institute. Dr. Frances Consett, of the Bingley Training College, was in the chair and opened the meeting by giving a brief outline of the work of the British Film Institute, pointing out its necessity in our present day, its prospects and its great value.

The Rev. F. Heming Vaughan of the Merseyside Film Institute Society described the formation and the work of his own society and Professor Searle of Hull dealt with the assistance that could be given by the Yorkshire Council for Further Education and the co-operation of the trade.

It was then moved by Mr. B. R. Barrett and seconded by Mr. Edgar Roberts "That the formation of a local branch of the British Film Institute in the City of Bradford was most desirable and would be beneficial to the public, and that such a local branch be formed." The motion was carried.

The meeting concluded with a demonstration of 16 mm. sound equipment by the British Thompson-Houston Company.

Arrangements are now in hand for the formation of a local council and a programme for the new branch of the Film Institute. In the meanwhile enquiries should be addressed to Mr. B. D. Margerison, or to Mr. C. Wright, Y.M.C.A. Offices, Bradford.

## FILM INSTITUTE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

At a conference held on March 21st at Queen's University, Belfast, it was decided that a Film Institute should be formed for Northern Ireland in association with the British Film Institute. Viscount Charlemont, the Ulster Minister for Education, took the chair, and Mr. A. C. Cameron gave an address. An inaugural meeting is to be held in the near future; in the meantime enquiries should be addressed to Miss R. Duffin, Riddel Hall, Stranmillis Road, Belfast.

## MERSEYSIDE FILM INSTITUTE SOCIETY

The following report has been received from the secretary:

Our Society continues to grow at a great rate and the extended range of our work strains our voluntary resources to the uttermost. The preparation each month of a bulletin with a list of selected films demands a close scrutiny of the programmes of the numerous Merseyside cinemas. This is posted to our 910 members.

The exhibition of stills from famous films, held in the Bluecoat Lecture Hall in January, attracted 300 paying visitors in addition to a large attendance of our own members. Films from all the important film producing countries were included and the national arrangement of the photographs gave a valuable means of comparative study. Other aspects were shown in the sections devoted to Education, Propaganda and Industry with special reference to the work of Grierson in the old Empire Marketing Board (now the G.P.O. Film Library). A very representative exhibition of sub-standard cine apparatus was also on view, indicating the great developments which have taken place in these machines. As a result, a great stimulus was given to the use of the sub-standard film. A good Press was secured, the excellent notice in the *Manchester Guardian* in particular gave wide publicity to our enterprise.

Our special film show on February 16th was the first to be given in a public cinema, through the kind invitation of Mr. Walter C. Scott, the owner of the Belmont Cinema. Rene Clair's *Fourteenth of July* was given with some interesting shorts.

The opening of the News-Tatler Cinema in the centre of the city is an event to chronicle, because the Society supported



the application of this license before the magistrates. Several outstanding shorts which have been shown here indicate that the management is not inattentive to the policy of our Society. It is a very interesting experiment.

Perhaps the most important item of news is the invitation from the new management of the Prince of Wales Cinema to co-operate in the showing of films of exceptional artistic merit. The idea is to make the "Prince of Wales" a kind of repertory cinema such as the "Academy" in Leeds. The Society has been asked to supply a list of films which it desires to see and reduced prices of admission are offered to members throughout the week with the exception of Saturday. A members' night is to be arranged at the first showing of some of the films and opportunities for social intercourse in an ante-room specially reserved for us. If the right type of films can be obtained, this venture will meet a long-felt need among intelligent film-goers.

For the Amateur Film Exhibition on March 14th, some dozen films were entered and a selection was shown for the criticism of members. As a result of the interest aroused by a documentary film of the Ancient Chapel of Toxteth and a striking one of Liverpool docks and unemployment, an effort is to be made by the Society during the summer to produce a documentary film of Liverpool.

The activities of the Society have become so extensive that plans are being discussed for the provision of an office and room where members may meet. Should this materialise, a big extension of our work is possible over the wide area of Merseyside.

Hon. Secretaries: the Rev. F. Heming Vaughan, 27, Parkfield Road, Liverpool, and Mr. Charles Attlee, 38, Belvedere Road, Liverpool, 8.

### SCOTTISH EDUCATIONAL CINEMA SOCIETY

During the past three months interest in the Scottish Educational Society has rapidly spread. A large and representative body of Lanarkshire teachers met in Hamilton at the beginning of March to form a Lanarkshire Branch. The Director of Education for the county presided, short addresses were given by the President and Organising Secretary of the Society, and the evening also included a demonstration of the cinema's potentialities in the classroom. Various sub-standard projectors were used, including a new 16 mm., silent model which projects on to its screen from the rear, giving a brilliantly lit picture even under the full lighting of the hall. At the close of the meeting it was unanimously resolved to form a Lanarkshire Branch of the Society. Officials were elected and a large number of members enrolled.

A week later the Society was called upon to give another demonstration and a matinee for school children in the extreme north of Scotland, in Wick. A most enthusiastic audience of teachers attended the lecture demonstration, in which a 9.5 mm., battery-driven projector was used; for many of the schools there are still without electric light. On the following day the Society's *Windjammer* programme was presented to an audience of school children, many of whom were paying their first visit to Wick and also their first visit to the cinema. In the near future the Society's lecturer will pay a further visit to Wick, to lay his plans before the Caithness Branch of the Educational Institute of Scotland and the Rural Institute.

In Glasgow considerable progress has also been made. A number of matinee programmes have been circulated among the Educational Committees of Scotland. One of these programmes was shown on Saturday, 24th March, in two of the largest Glasgow cinemas, both of which were booked to capacity several days beforehand. Admission was 3d. for children, 6d. for teachers or students. The programme consisted of *Endurance*, *The Nightingale*, *Springtime in the Scillies*, *The Thames*, *Cape Town*, *In All His Glory* and *The Land of the Shamrock*.

On Friday and Saturday, 20th and 21st April, an exhibition of cinema and other visual aids to education will be held under the auspices of the Society in McLellan Galleries, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow. This is the first exhibition of its kind in Scotland and it has received the fullest support from the cinema trade.

In evening schools the use of the cinema has not developed as rapidly as in day schools, but it has been used regularly

in one Glasgow evening school for the past two years. The purpose there is a compromise between the purely educational and the purely cultural. Definitely educational films are shown, but feature films are also included. Recently a 16 mm. sound-on-disc projector was tried out, when *Everest* and *Surface Tension* were shown to the whole school.

(Enquiries should be addressed to the Honorary Secretary, Scottish Educational Cinema Society, Education Offices, 129 Bath Street, Glasgow.)

### RELIGIOUS FILM SOCIETY

In view of the very pertinent remarks made by the Archbishop of Canterbury at the annual dinner of the Cinematograph Exhibitors' Association of March 13th, the following report of the progress made by the religious film movement is of special interest.

Mr. O. A. Minns, general secretary of the Religious Film Society, 4, Bouverie Street, E.C.4., writes that among other activities, film demonstrations to clergy of the Established Church were held after evensong at Christ Church, St. Marylebone, and St. John's, Regent Park, through the courtesy of the Rector, the Rev. T. G. Brierley Kay; and *Livingstone* and *The Way of the Lord* were shown recently by the invitation of the Rev. P. T. R. Kirk at Christ Church, Westminster.

There have been many occasions on which similar film services have been held in the churches of other denominations, and a number of members of the Guilds of Light have installed portable projectors (recommended by the Guilds) for the purpose of holding religious services on Sundays and week-evenings, as well as for educational and cultural purposes.

The Guilds of Light and The Religious Film Society do not advocate the substitution of films for the usual Sunday services. A series of programmes embracing twelve different Bible subjects illustrated with slides and films has been prepared in collaboration with the Rev. Thomas Tiplady, H.C.F., a member of the council of the Guilds of Light and also of the Cinematograph Exhibitors' Association.

As regards specifically religious films the Guilds frankly admit at present these are considerably limited, but a schedule has been prepared of several suitable subjects, some of which have been used by members with good results. In addition, a list of films has been compiled dealing with the teaching of temperance from the medical and scientific points of view.

A new film, definitely religious in character, will shortly be available with sound synchronisation, and later a silent version also. In this production the Rev. W. H. Lax of Poplar is personally associated. A further series of films is now in hand appropriate for use on church premises.

"The Guilds of Light," explains Mr. Minns, "is a purely voluntary organisation and the Religious Film Society is its 'business' auxiliary."

"The wide catholicity of our constitution is indicated by the fact that all the Christian Churches are represented under the Bishop of London as President. Neither of these organisations is permitted by its constitution to make profits. Our funds are being devoted exclusively to the assistance of churches and other Christian institutions with a definitely spiritual object in our minds. In consequence of the generous support of our hon. joint treasurer, Mr. J. Arthur Rank, D.L., we are hoping steadily to increase our usefulness and service."

### TYNESIDE FILM SOCIETY

The Tyneside Film Society had its beginnings at a small public meeting held in Newcastle in December, 1932. On that occasion a provisional committee was formed to consider practical steps, and after fourteen months during which the committee experienced a series of reverses, January, 1934 finally saw the committee in a position to report that the major obstacles had been overcome.

The membership was 350 at the end of January and had increased to some 450 by the end of February. The subscription for the session 1933-34 is six shillings and a comprehensive programme has been organised. Of the three private exhibitions arranged, two have so far been held: the films which have been shown include *The New Generation*,



Sous Les Toits de Paris, A Nous la Liberté, King's English, Der Traumende Mund, In der Nacht, and The Country comes to Town. Other items on the Society's programme are two private exhibitions of silent documentary and entertainment films for children, a public film exhibition for children arranged in conjunction with the Modern Languages Association (the programme included *A Nous la Liberté*), a public exhibition of "stills" from British and foreign films of outstanding merit or interest, displays of amateur 16 mm. films, joint meetings with local dramatic and other societies, and lectures on film appreciation and the technique of production. The Society has formed a strong link with Montagu Amateur Pictures, an amateur Newcastle film-producing body which has won international and national awards, and Mr. A. G. Greaves, A.R.P.S., its chairman, has joined the Film Society's Committee.

As the objects of the Society include the exertion of some influence where possible on the character of programmes in local cinemas, a proposal to issue a regular commentary on local films (along the lines pursued by the Edinburgh Film Guild) has received consideration. In the meantime the Chairman of the Society, Mr. Ernest Dyer, has been appointed the regular film critic of Tyneside's most influential newspaper, the *Newcastle Evening Chronicle* and has been given an entirely free hand. The feature has been warmly welcomed by discriminating film-goers though trade reception in some quarters, perhaps naturally, has been rather luke-warm. Big business and sincere criticism frequently mix badly but there is every indication that Tyneside will benefit from the constructive criticism now featured in its leading newspaper.

The more pedagogic aspects of the work are being borne in mind, and there are hopes of instituting a local branch of the Film Institute in the coming winter. Experiments with educational films for children have been carried out during the winter by the Newcastle Literary and Philosophical Society acting in co-operation with the Newcastle Education Authority. At fortnightly intervals, parties of some 400 children from elementary schools have attended displays arranged in the Society's theatre and the films shown have been linked up with class-room lessons. The programmes have contained several films of photographic merit such as Rotha's *Contact*, Grierson's *Drifters* and such G.P.O. films as Wright's *West Indian Cattle* and *Underground*. The Tyneside Film Society has here again formed a link, the Librarian of the Literary and Philosophical Society, Mr. M. C. Pottinger, being Hon. Secretary and Treasurer of the Film Society. Correspondence should be addressed to the Hon. Secretary and Treasurer, Tyneside Film Society, c/o Literary and Philosophical Society, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1.

Arthur Chesney as Samuel Pepys in *COLONEL BLOOD*, by W. R. Lipscomb (Sound City, M.G.M.) which is being released at the end of April. Seventeenth century music is played in this film by the Dolmetsch family

## FILM SOCIETY OF GLASGOW

The society has just completed its fifth season; its membership, which, at the end of the first season numbered under 80, has now risen to 670 exclusive of honorary members.

The subscription is 13s. inclusive for ordinary members, and 8s. inclusive for student members.

At the outset of the season the Council reached the conclusion that we should need larger premises. The accommodation of the King's Cinema, where the meetings of the Society had been held during the season 1932-33, had been taxed to the utmost. The question of finding larger accommodation was by no means an easy one, but after considerable difficulty the Council was successful in obtaining the use of Cranston's Picture House.

During the season the usual eight meetings were held in the Picture House; the principal feature films shown being: *Le Rosier de Madame Husson*, *Der Traumende Mund*, *The Fourteenth of July*, *Ekstase*, *The Road to Life* and *The Deserter*. Among the short films were *O'er Hill and Dale*, *Granton Trawler*, *Harlekin* and *Tonende Handschrift*. The last film in particular evoked great enthusiasm.

In addition to the ordinary meetings, three lectures illustrated by sub-standard films were arranged and delivered—by Mr. John Grierson, by Mr. C. A. Oakley, Scottish Director of the Institute of Industrial Psychology, and Mr. J. C. Elder of the Scottish Educational Cinema Society. These lectures were well attended and greatly appreciated.

For the first time in the society's history the local magistrates agreed to allow members of the society to take guests to the society's meetings.

Enquiries to the hon. secretary, Mr. D. Paterson Walker, 127, St. Vincent Street, Glasgow, C.2.

## MAIDSTONE FILM SOCIETY

The Maidstone Film Society's recent programmes included the following films: *A Symphony of the Sea* (Geoffrey Barkas); *En Natt* (Molander); Stuart Legg's *The New Generation*; *Don Quixote* (Pabst); *A Nous la Liberté* (Clair); *Hunted People*, by Friedrich Feher; a cockney sketch called *We take off our hats*; a mario-nette film directed by J. Elder Wills—*Don Dougio Farabanca*; *La Maternelle*; Mrs. Chapman's *Across Lapland*; and a Walt Disney cartoon, *The Spider and the Fly*.

All communications to the hon. secretary, Miss G. M. Nicholson, Fowden Hall, London Road, Maidstone.







Greta Garbo and John Gilbert in *QUEEN CHRISTINA*, by Rouben Mamoulian (Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer)

## FILMS OF THE QUARTER

By Paul Rotha

**P**ERIWIGGED romanticism is in the movie market and whether we like it or not, the cycle of costume melodrama started by *Henry VIII* is now centred directly overhead. Have no fear, the mood will pass. But in the meantime make haste to admire Garbo as Christina and Bergner as Catherine. These two goddesses of movie fought their battle across the green of Leicester Square and I confess that it was hard to choose between them. Neither film is good; but both give us a woman for whom a real picture has yet to be created.

Magnetic as always, superbly controlling her actions and lines, Garbo again makes me sigh to think that she still awaits an opportunity to put her very real ability on to celluloid. By now I am convinced that it is the American system of movie which holds her back, prevents her from discovering a director who will bring her to the screen as the amazing woman that she is and not the synthetic actress that Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer imagine her to be. In *Queen Christina* she is loveliness personified, at her best

in men's clothes striding about the set, but the whole background to the film is superficial and Mamoulian's direction gives her little assistance. The polyglot ideology upon which the fragile fabric of Hollywood is built cannot even begin to understand the qualities which must go to the making of a historical picture. *Catherine the Great* on the other hand, is a moderately well made film with excellent settings and photography, but lacking again in any depth of feeling for either its period or the characters it interprets. Czinner's style of direction is frankly more theatrical than filmic, with the result that Bergner does not show us the best which we may expect.

One of the most successful pictures of the quarter has been *Little Women* with the much-discussed Hepburn girl. However much you may dislike the sentiments and traditions for which it stands, you will not deny that Louisa Alcott's novel has been given good screen translation and that the picture carries conviction and sincerity. Utterly different in manner and aim was James Whale's



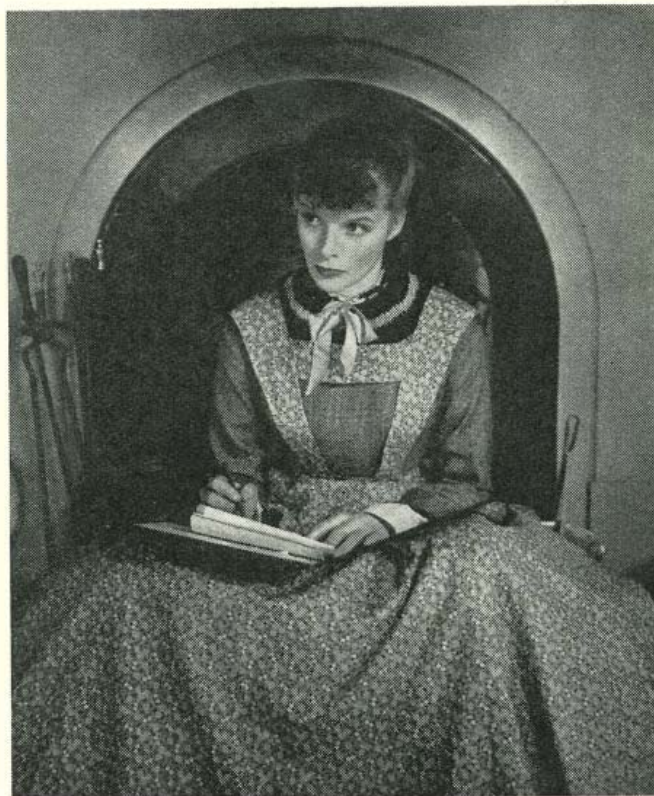
The Invisible Man, from Wells's early fantasy, a story that held countless opportunities for crazy treatment but of which advantage has not been taken. Chief credit must be given the technicians who made the thing at all possible but it is regrettable that Whale's direction plays for comedy instead of drama and that the acting, with the exception of Rains, fails to rate above the calibre of the local village hall.

Perhaps the greatest disappointment of recent months was Van Dyke's epic of the Arctic, *Mala the Magnificent*, an endeavour that had in it the possibilities of a great film. As it is, Van Dyke's Hollywood association prevents him from finding more in nature than the lust to kill. The unnecessary deaths of animals in this film are nauseating, and I personally refuse to believe that the slaughter of animals, whether undertaken in perilous or safe circumstances, presents a box-office appeal to English audiences. From all points of view, *Mala* fails to approach Flaherty's twelve-year-old *Nanook* and by its artificial conception does not fall within the class of documentary.

Among comedies the Marx Brothers' *Duck Soup* swept the board for sophisticated amusement. It was not one of their best pictures, but like its predecessors, was full of that wholly irresponsible behaviour and mad implications which cause these brilliantly clever brothers to bring a few moments of real relaxation into cinema. Best among English contributions was another Jack Hulbert comedy, *Jack Ahoy*, which fully maintained the standard of harmless hilarity previously established by this comedian.

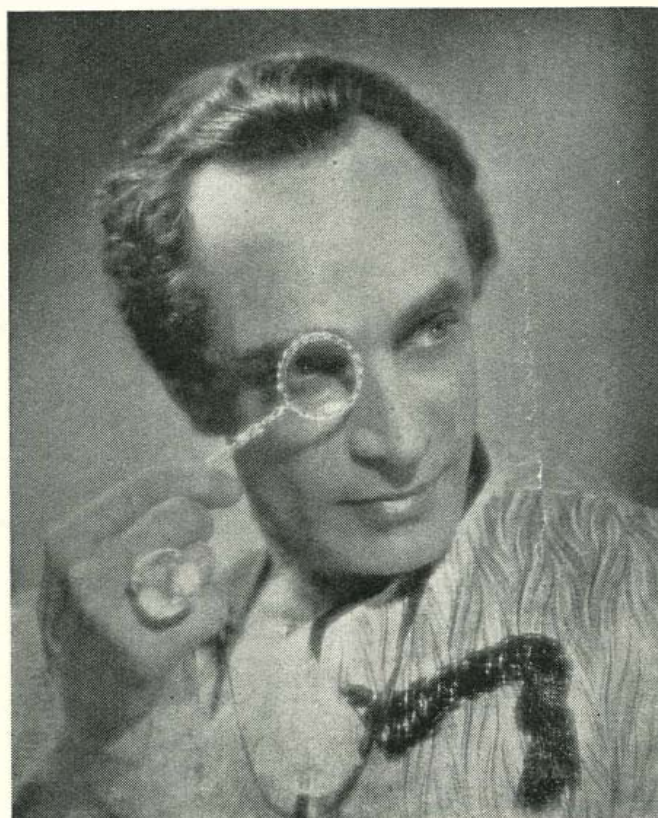
Recent importations from the Continent have been singularly disappointing. The new Curzon Cinema, admirably designed and decorated, opened amid much social chatter with Willi Forst's *Unfinished Symphony* from Vienna. It tells the familiar story of Schubert's unsuccessful love affair with pretty sentimental charm and is directed without any astonishing display of ability. Mention should be made of the admirable quality of the musical recording by R.C.A. High Fidelity. Of other foreign pictures, *Liebelei*, *Le Petit Roi* and *Prenez garde a la peinture* bring little to enlarge our experience. *La Rue sans nom* is distinguished by some fine filmic acting by Constant Rémy and Gabriel Gabrio as a pair of ex-criminals in a Paris slum, and by Pierre Azais and a large cast of other professional actors whose character studies are played with a sincerity and realism that are remarkable even from a French studio. Pierre Charel's direction is largely a matter of dialogue and close-ups.

For many the most entertaining moments of the quarter must have been the Disney colour Symphonies, and special reference should be made to the programmes of cartoons organised by the ever-enterprising little Tatler Theatre. Disney has now reached his height of imaginative power and rhythmic sense. Some of the most recent symphonies, such as *Lullabyland* and *Old King Cole*, have not quite displayed the same delicacy of treatment and smoothness of draughtsmanship which made Father



Katherine Hepburn as Jo in *LITTLE WOMEN* (Radio)

Noah's Ark and *Flowers and Trees* so completely satisfying. Personally I regret the introduction of the human element which seems to necessitate a departure from the pure fantasy of his animal and vegetable kingdom.



Conrad Veidt as *JEW SÜSS* (Gaumont-British)





THUNDER OVER MEXICO, by Eisenstein (Zenifilms)

## DOCUMENTARY FILMS

### THUNDER OVER MEXICO (American)

Production : Upton Sinclair. Photography : Edouard Tissé. Assembling : Sol Lesser. Music : Hugo Riesenfeld. Distribution : Zenifilms. Sound-on-film, 35mm.

Probably more ink has been spilt and more reputations soiled over this picture than any other since cinema began, and certainly little need be said now when so many have contributed to the argument. Let it suffice to report that the film bearing this name contains little which should be associated with Eisenstein, as those familiar with *Potemkin*, *October* and *The General Line* will agree. To take a director's uncut print and edit it to fit an entirely different conception is an act of vandalism which merely inspires contempt for the perpetrators. Sinclair, for whom every socialist has previously had respect, must for ever regret his impetuosity for originally backing Eisenstein and later for withdrawing that support. My only regret about the picture is the likelihood that some uninformed persons will accept it as representative of Eisenstein's

work and will go their ways disillusioned. Your intelligent filmgoer, with few exceptions, is unaware of the purely technical importance of cutting, and will be unable to appreciate that Eisenstein's peculiar ability lies not so much in his "shooting" of material but in his conception of subject and in the referential method he employs during editing. The visual loveliness with which Tissé has invested the images of this film must not be confused with Eisenstein's dialectic approach to sociological material. Beautiful visuals though they may be, they are meaningless without being set in order by their creator.

For those that care to know, the original conception of this film envisaged a theme which would carry in its immense stride the whole of Mexico (past, present and future) in the form of a poem of sociological intent. The first part dealt, it seems, with Tehuantepec, where woman is absolute and man is glad to shift responsibility on to his wife's shoulders. The second told of a farm, set in an entirely different environment, and stressed man's supremacy, the maguey plant being used as a symbolic phallic



reference. The third was composed of a light romantic story of the bull ring, an interlude presumably before the culminating storm when all Mexico should rise with fire and sword against its capitalist oppressors.

Of this nothing appears in the picture as shown. Lesser, Sinclair's henchman for the job, selected a single minor episode and made it into the whole film, adding a prologue and epilogue so naive in their conception as to be laughable. We are accustomed to socialist views being muzzled by upholders of the capitalist system but for socialist to thwart socialist is something new even in cinema. P.R.

### THE SOIL IS THIRSTY (Soviet)

Production: Vostok-kino. Direction: Raismann. Photography: Kuzmetsov. Sound-on-film, 35mm. Superimposed titles by Amkino, American distributors of Soviet Films.

Despite the execrable condition of the print, the mutilation of the sound-band and the crudity of the American titling, this film from far-off Turkestan has the makings of another *Turksib*, which it closely resembles. It is the story of water-starved Turkmen whose crops perish in the burning sun and whose wells are dry, while the local Bey, true to the Soviet film tradition, monopolises the water supply for his luscious cabbage fields and ripening orchards. Nearby stand the splendid ruins of ancient palaces built by the Tartars before the river was deflected from its course. Aroused at last from their submission, the peasants send a petition to the nearest Soviet headquarters, as a result of which five lusty young men, full of joy for their job, arrive by railroad across the burning sand. Thwarted in their first attempt to enlist local labour by the intervention of the Bey, who plays upon the superstitions of the peasants, the young men secure help from a few Turkmen and set out to change the course of the river again. The remainder of the film details their colossal undertaking, culminating in a tremendous typhoon just as the last barrier of rock is to be removed by dynamite but which fails to prevent the young Soviets from winning through.

For an English audience the film is overlong and the continuity too entangled. Strange visions, supposedly linked up with local legend, are introduced, which although probably comprehensible to Russian audiences are quite unintelligible to the western mind. But the gay humour of the engineers is something new in Soviet pictures and is welcome. Comparison with Turin's *Turksib* is inevitable. Raismann has neither marshalled his facts nor stated his argument so clearly as did Turin, but is his equal in technical skill. Several sequences are indeed brilliantly handled; notably the arrival of the train across the desert, the building of suspense before the big explosion and the joyful welcome accorded the successful engineers when they return to the village.

But more important than technique is the sincerity which underlies the whole conception. By his passionate belief in the sociological purpose of his theme, Raismann makes what is purely a local problem a matter of international concern and uses its incident

to bring out human emotions of universal interest. You feel that this impersonal approach brings a remote problem of an even remoter Turkestan to your personal attention. This achievement would have been impossible had the director not approached his theme from a sociological standpoint; in fact, the picture would not have risen beyond the value of a mere travelogue. As it is, crude and unintelligible though parts may be, *Soil is Thirsty* has that vitality and enthusiasm which distinguished the earlier Soviet pictures of the revolutionary period.

P.R.

### OCTOBER (Soviet)

Production: Sovkino. Direction: S. M. Eisenstein. Photography: Edouard Tisse. Art-Direction: V. I. Kovrigin. Music: Edmund Meisel. Silent, 35mm.

This third film of Eisenstein has so frequently been discussed that it comes as a shock to realise that it only received its first English showing this March. Hitherto the version distributed outside Russia was condensed but the copy shown by the Film Society was taken from the original negative and consisted of some thirteen reels. It will be recalled that the film was made as part of the Tenth Anniversary Celebrations of the October Revolution in November, 1927, and that its content embraced the events in St. Petersburg from February to November in 1917.

Although six years old, and six years is a lifetime in cinema, the picture retains its tremendous strength of direction and in places still remains a magnificent creative achievement. Eisenstein's approach to his subject is probably unique in that he has taken a series of actual events and presented them according to a definite political point of view. He has acted, as it were, in the capacity of an observer and treated each incident in this vivid panorama of historical events from a satiric, dramatic, philosophical, political or comic viewpoint to suit his especial purpose. Watching this great sequence of intensely dramatic situations develop on the screen, you become aware of the intellect which has gone to the making of this film. Compared with any two-a-penny talkie shouting its tin-bellied self-importance from the canopies of the West-End, *October* is a giant among films. It contains all the vices and virtues of a big film. In its full version, it is too long; and includes some sequences of childish preciosity such as the symbolic Napoleons. On the other hand, there are sequences which are as great as anything which has been done in cinema—such as the raising of the bridge and the scene in the Tsarita's bedroom. For satirical commentary, Kerensky's entry of the Winter Palace up the never ending flight of stairs, his reception by the Czar's valets, and his final entrance into the holy of holies has never been surpassed. I can think of no other satire so bitter and of such masterly construction. Of particular interest also is the method of titling, which not only is used for explanatory purposes but in itself supplies the personal comments of the director, a form of utterance not possible in the modern spoken commentary. It is clear, moreover, from this fresh viewing of an old picture how Eisenstein's





From THUNDER OVER MEXICO, by Eisenstein (Zenifilms)

peculiar contribution to cinema lies in his remarkable powers of reference and in his use of mental associations for dialectic expression. Technically, except for the instances noted above, most of his cutting now seems cheap while Tissé's photography is in the news-reel category. It was unfortunate, although courageous, to allow Meisel's musical score to accompany the film, for it nearly ruined the thirteen reels with its four-square repetition and once broke down altogether. Yet, despite these defects, *October* stands high in the order of cinema and you cannot fail to be impressed by the magnitude of the task and the sincerity of its creation. Once again we are shown the vitality which a sociological approach brings to cinema as compared with the timorous tread of the purely artistic ideal. P.R.

#### UN MONASTERE (French)

Production: Pathe-Nathan. Direction: Robert Alexandre. Photography: Chadeaux and Mesrobian. Sound-on-film, R.C.A. recording, 35mm.

A noble simplicity distinguishes this straightforward document taken by special permission within the monastery community of La Trappe under what would appear to be arduous conditions. The scenario plainly records a day in the life of a Trappist monk from dawn till sunset; the treatment being quietly honest and free from fuss and nonsense. Alexandre has given his film a dignified beauty both in the sober quality of the photography and the solemnity of the compositions. He has successfully created on the screen the austere atmosphere of the monastery by a process of straight recording. Many of the shots of monks, grouped in their pictorially pleasing robes,

will remain in your mind, as will also the special ceremony of the funeral of one of the brothers. Development is necessarily slow and lingering, but as an unvarnished statement of actuality the film has value. P.R.

#### STEEL (Italian)

Production: Cines. Direction: Walter Ruttmann. Photography: Massino Terzano, Domencio Scala. Music: G. F. Malipiero. Recording: R.C.A. High Fidelity on film, 35mm.

Difficulties over recording royalties make it unlikely that the extracts from this picture, recently shown to the Film Society, will be seen again in England. This is a pity, for it is a brilliant piece of work within narrow limits. Although there is some kind of story "freely adapted from a theme by Luigi Pirandello," it is unimportant. Two men work in the same sheet-rolling mill, but Ruttmann has placed them against a background of almost every kind of shop to be found in the biggest steel works. In order to weld together these violently different background elements the cutting is worked up to a fury which sweeps human values clean off the screen in a tremendous physical thrill, culminating with gasps of anguish from the audience when a man is crushed to death by a red-hot steel plate. The effect is shattering, but only temporary; because Ruttmann's cutting is based simply upon the movement within each shot without a wider reference to significance of movement and composition and their place in the pattern of the whole film. The sound is more interesting than the picture. Recording is first-class, and the sound-effects which accompany the general steel-works sequences are brilliantly realistic. In the sequences where the narrative appears out of its background, the effects give place to music, and the transition is graduated by making the opening musical phrases little more than sound-effects, the scoring being so skilful that the change from effects to music is hardly noticeable. Apart from this there is no imaginative use of sound, and it is disappointing to find a composer such as Malipiero being called upon to contribute nothing more than great technical skill. Indeed, disappointment is the abiding impression produced by this film. The names of Ruttmann and Malipiero, backed by good photography and excellent recording, were auspicious of memorable results which remain unachieved. After impression recalls brilliant technical virtuosity; nothing more. J.B.H.

#### MEN AGAINST DEATH

Scenario and Direction: C. H. Dand. Photography: James Burger. Recording: Asfi. Sound-on-film, 35mm.

The scene is a Welsh slate quarry and the story is of a falling crag. Some effort has been made to take an everyday but out-of-the-way industry and build up a dramatic crisis. It is unfortunate that the crisis in question does not take place; neither in actuality nor on the screen. I would that Dand had taken a less ambitious approach and been content



with a simple re-creation of the daily task ; the use to which the product is put and the labour that goes to produce it. As it is, there is little hang-over from the film and that only of a man mounting a ladder. More ladders, more mounting, and a broader reference given to both and there would have been another minor documentary for your list. Editing is along brisk lines, cut for effect rather than meaning. Photographically, it leaves much to be desired.

P.R.

#### WHITHER GERMANY ? (English)

Production : Mansfield Markham. Commentary : J. B. Williams. Distribution : B and N Films. Sound on film, 35mm.

Ostensibly a straightforward narration of the events and personalities in Germany from the hey-day of the ex-Kaiser's reign up till the establishment of the Third Reich by Hitler, the visuals in this film are given remarkable point by a skilfully composed commentary, which although in the main steers an impartial course, at times throws out comments and references to which political implications might well be put. An expanding swastika at the opening immediately grips the interest of the audience, after which we return to a description of pre-War Germany. We see the obsession of the Hohenzollern family for military, naval and even aerial armaments. Satiric reference is made to the Crown Prince's passion for uniforms and self-publicity, illustrated on the screen by cleverly chosen shots of inspections and parades. The War is bridged impressionistically and the ensuing period of economic depression, the occupation of the Rhine, the inflation of the mark, the signing of the Kellogg Pact and the subsequent

evacuation of occupied territory unfold in sequence. From here there is a gap until Hitler's meteoric arrival occupies the canvas and a vivid presentation of the triumph of armed Fascism with all its attendant brutality and oppression.

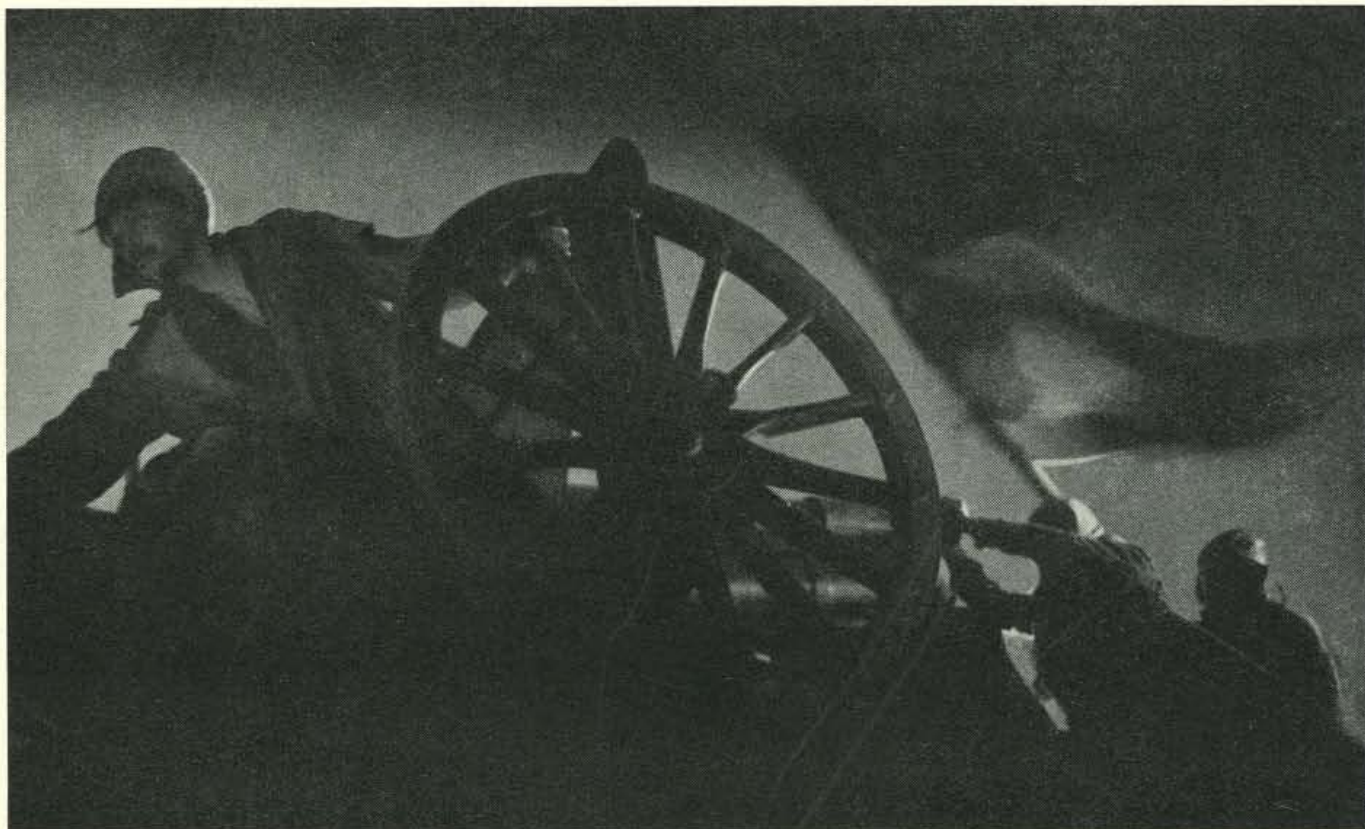
Although almost wholly composed of news-reel dupe, the tremendous importance of the events shown on the screen causes *Whither Germany ?* to be unique among current pictures. The idea for the film, I am given to understand, originated in Paris, the material being collected by the French newspaper *Eclair*. It was, however, entirely re-edited for its English distribution.

It is not without significance that the picture was refused a certificate by the British Board of Film Censors despite the fact that news-reel material does not come under its ruling; that it has received a sanction for local showing by the London County Council and has now, I believe, secured a wide booking all over the country where local magistrates have given the necessary permission. Admittedly the commentary has been so skilfully written that it might well be called pro-German and anti-Nazi, but at the same time it suggests that political propaganda is no longer debarred the English screen. It will be interesting to see if every political outlook will be allowed the same freedom of expression. P.R.

#### EUROPE TO-DAY (British Movietone News)

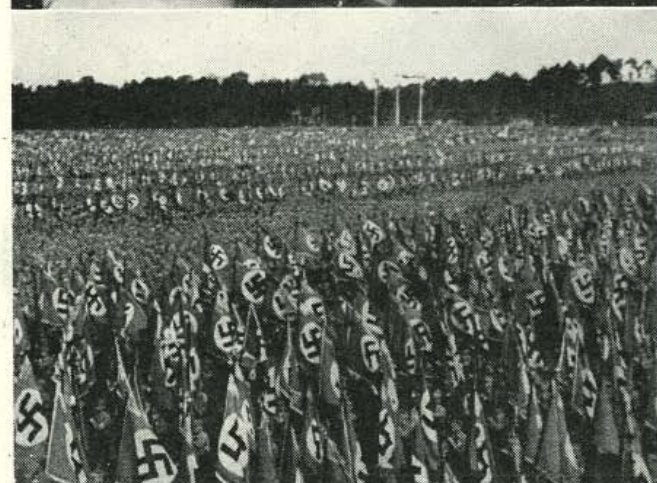
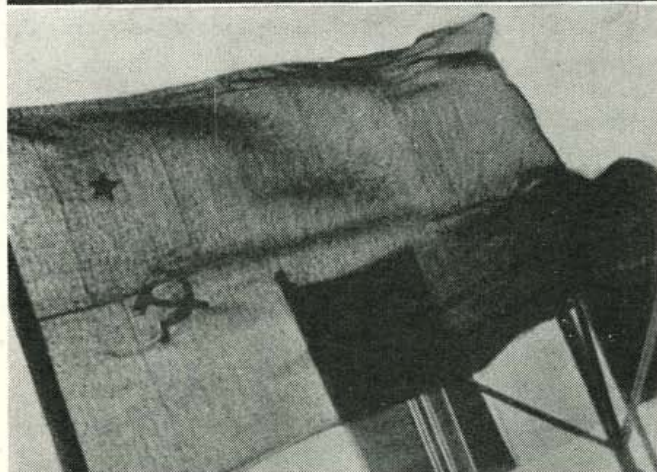
Edited by Leslie L. Landau. Commentary, Vernon Bartlett. Sound on film, 35 mm.

When Mr. Bartlett made his first film commentary on world affairs at the British Movietone News Theatre in London some weeks ago the film critic



OCTOBER, by Eisenstein ; photographed by Edouard Tisse (Sovkino)





EUROPE TO-DAY, with Vernon Bartlett (Br. Movietone)

of the *Sunday Times* (who had not seen the picture) expressed grave misgivings about the dangers of allowing "a man of strong political bias to make 'outspoken comments' about international affairs through the medium of the entertainment screen." Next Sunday Mr. Bartlett mildly protested that he had no strong political opinions and that his attempt to explain the causes of the European ferment was confined to one special theatre for one week's programme only. It was, in fact, only Mr. Bartlett's commentary that made Landau's very skilful arrangement of newsreel sequences safe for popular consumption; without him this disturbing procession of armies, flags, dictators and abortive conferences would be not only misleading but possibly, to certain audiences, highly inflammatory. Facts cannot speak for themselves in a newsreel any more than in a newspaper; all intelligent selection involves the expression, however modified, of some sort of bias.

In addition the material available for selection in a newsreel is limited to the kind of subject that is most readily accessible to the camera man: pageants, royalties, ceremonies and parades; all very useful to the hardworked reporter but strongly military in flavour. The news film industry has not yet reached the stage when it can tackle the real news of the week; it lacks men to scour the country, directors to see that they go to the right places, and money to spend on experimental material. But with the spreading of the news theatres and the reports of their success all over the country their resources should be greatly increased. The more material the greater the possibilities to the editor, and we shall no doubt see the splitting up of the newsreel into political camps. We have heard of a proposed Socialist news unit; and there have been decided Fascist leanings in another. Unless all newsreels come under State control we may soon be choosing our news theatre as we choose our newspaper, for its political colour; and both would give us a biased version of what is happening. By that time there will be so many different versions that we may have a chance of seeing all sides of the question. Meanwhile the most practical safeguard for the impressionable film-goer of to-day would be the existence of some sort of monthly review—the nearest possible approach to the weekly review of the press—which will gather up at leisure the hot press items of the month, sift the significant matter from the rest and conduct an enquiry as disinterested as is humanly possible on the meaning and trend of affairs by comparative illustration. Mr. Bartlett himself, when interviewed on the subject by *SIGHT AND SOUND*, agreed that a useful service could be performed by a regular feature of this kind, covering a wide area, provided it could be undertaken with an adequate allowance of time and footage. This is the third of British Movietone's special releases on current affairs (the others presented Lady Oxford, Madeleine Carroll, Beverley Nichols and Professor Joad) and one admires their enterprise in launching a series which is something of a landmark in film journalism.

Y.M.R.



**OMBRES SUR L'EUROPE.** Distribution, Pathe-scope; camera; Louis Cottard and Rene Brut. French, sound, 35mm. 4750 ft.

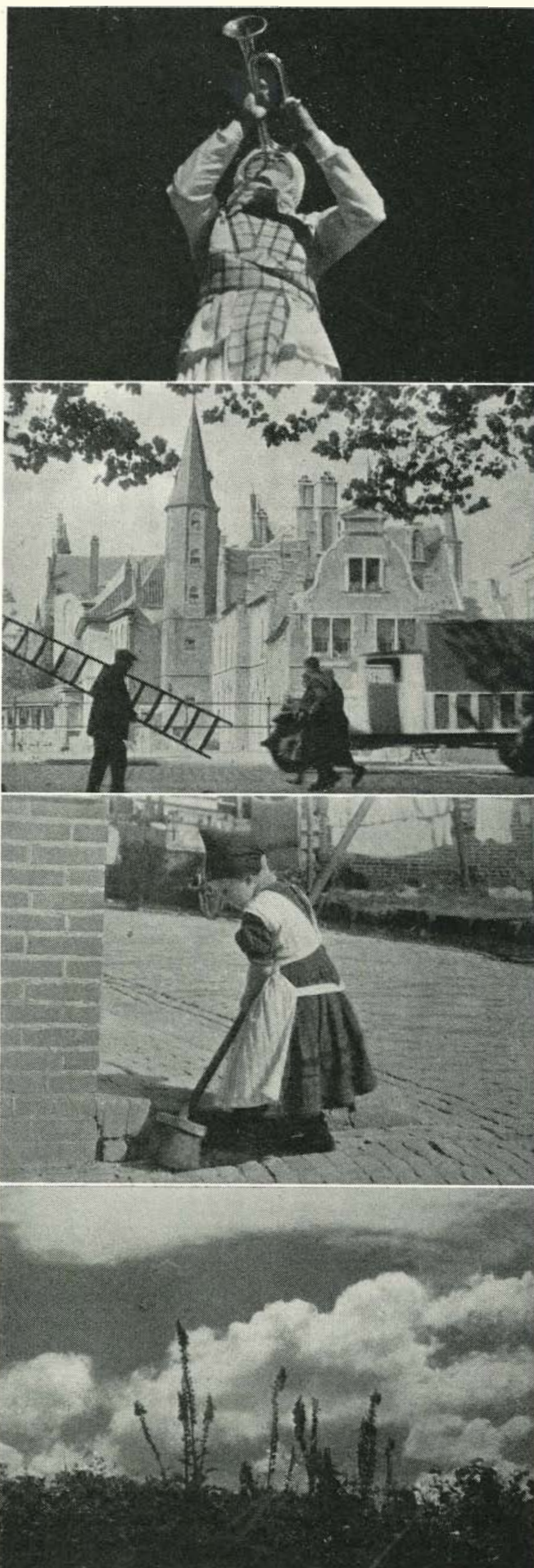
Just how inflammatory political propaganda can be seen on the screen may be judged by this French film of the Polish Corridor, which, now that Germany and Poland have temporarily patched up their differences, remains an interesting museum piece for the historian. It also contained some extremely attractive camera work, the beauties of the country being adroitly used to throw into stronger relief the menace of the encroaching swastika. The camera does much in the way of symbolic suggestion—notably the pack of cards collapsing under gun-fire: the close-up of pigs rooting in the rich earth, while the commentator records the greed of Germany who “covets this fair land”; and the final indignity of the snow-white eagle of Poland in Dantzig's coat of arms, blackened under our eyes into the guise of the Prussian bird of prey; although the most telling points of the argument are delivered in Polish-French which would make them a little difficult to follow in this country (none of the conversation was translated when the film was shown in London). Y.M.R.

**THE FRENCH 'U' and LA GARE.** G.B. Instructional; demonstrated by E. M. Stephan; direction, Mary Field; photography, Charles van Enger. Viewed and approved by the British Film Institute.

These two films have been conceived as one complete piece of instruction and should rightly be reviewed together, although it may well be found useful in school to repeat the first picture several times before passing on to the second.

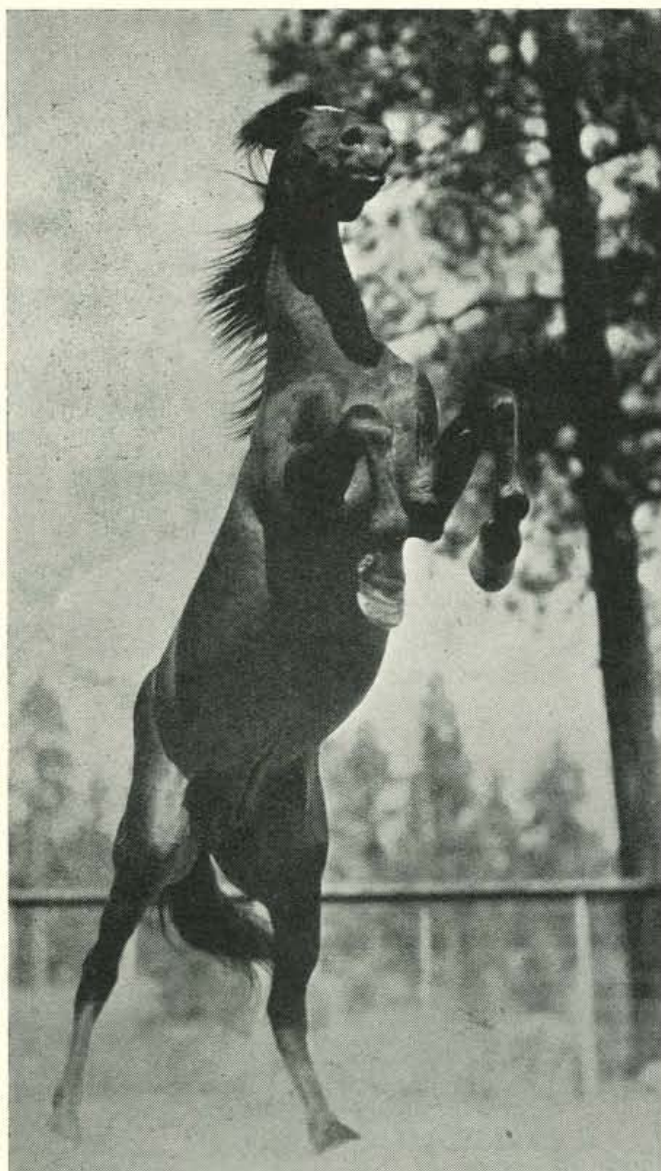
The first film, *The French 'U'*, exhibits with uncanny skill and directness the phonetic principles underlying the formation of that vowel sound, and, in doing so, marks a definite step forward in the technique of language teaching by means of the talking film. Monsieur Stéphan has enriched Miss Field's pictorial ideas with his own wide experience of the broadcasting microphone and the resultant picture may be expected to enable pupils in their first year of learning French to master the difficulties of the 'U' sound in something under twenty minutes.

The scene of the film is laid in a classroom where Monsieur Stéphan begins by putting the letter 'U' on the blackboard, followed by the English words 'bee' and 'sea'; the class are seen and heard pronouncing the two words. Leaving sufficient pause for audiences to accustom themselves thoroughly to making the sound of the English 'ee,' Monsieur Stephan then directs the class of boys in front of him to round their lips tightly and repeat the previous sound without any alteration of the tongue and teeth position. Persistent and patient instruction in making the two sounds 'ee' and 'oo' eventually produces the correct sound of the French 'U' first from one and then from another, and finally from all the boys in the class.



From the MAGIC CARPET series (Fox) American





SMOKY, by Victor Jory : American (Fox)

Another method of teaching this vowel sound is next developed ; directing the boys to whistle, the lecturer prevails upon them to hold the rounded-lip position and bring their vocal chords into play, thus producing the French sound required. The class is then carefully drilled in several phrases, such as 'bien sur,' 'une minute,' containing the sound they have just mastered ; on every occasion the valuable moment of silence is left for repetition of the phrase by members of the audience.

The other film shows Monsieur Stéphan at the Gare de Lyons with his small daughter (played by Cécile Saurat) booking and entraining for Lyons ; one hears and sees the everyday French speech of porters, booking clerks and bookstall sellers and the train's conductor. An excellent teaching point is the frequent use made of the phrases learnt in the first film.

As entertainment the two films are not conspicuously successful, nor are they intended to be, seeing that the merit of the complete picture rests in its being a direct piece of instruction of unusual significance.

V.A.

## BOOKS TO READ

### OUR MOVIE MINDED CHILDREN, by Henry J. Forman, Macmillan Company (New York), 10s.

This is the popular summary of an investigation into the effects of the cinema upon children in America which has been carried on for four years, 1929 to 1933, under the aegis of the Payne Fund of New York—probably the most elaborate investigation of its kind yet undertaken in any country. The U.S. Motion Picture Research Council first suggested that the enquiry should be undertaken, and thereafter the work was carried out by a Committee of Educational Research under the chairmanship of Dr. W. W. Charters of Ohio State University, well known for his work in connection with educational broadcasting and educational films. Mr. Forman's book summarises thirteen reports which have been issued by the Research Committee, and which deal with such specialised subjects as "movies, delinquency and crime," "emotional responses of children to the motion picture situation," "children's sleep," and so forth.

He begins by presenting Dr. Edgar Dale's statistical analyses of the kind of films which children see when they go to the pictures in America—and on the average every one of America's 29½ million school children go to the "movies" once a week throughout the year. "The chances are more than even," writes Mr. Forman, "that they will encounter upon the screen an unsavoury sex picture, a crime picture poorly and superficially contrived, or something bristling with vulgarity and innuendo, abounding in shoddy characters with tawdry goals in life, of questionable morals or occupations, or wholly immoral." How much of this do they retain in their minds? More than we think, answers Dr. P. W. Holaday, whose investigations go to show that even eight and nine-year olds retain 60 per cent. of what adults retain in their memory of the pictures. After three months, the averages are found to be virtually the same, with even occasionally a slight *increase* in the amount recalled upon the part of the youngest children. Sleep impairment—either in the form of sleeplessness, or of drugged stupor—is one of the consequences of attendance at harmful film programmes often shown under conditions which are anything but hygienic. Other physical and mental ill effects are produced by the over-stimulation of the nerves caused by excessive film-going, and still more by seeing horror and fight pictures, which may mean little to adults (who discount from their reality) but cause serious psychological disturbances in children. "The immense number of hours spent in a darkened theatre, often with no ventilation at all, when they might be engaged in healthful outdoor play, cannot, apart from all other considerations, but have an effect upon the young bodies and nerves." This sentence is typical of the rather pessimistic outlook of those engaged in this research, who do not allow for the fact that most children in crowded cities do not, alas, have much opportunity for healthy outdoor recreation, and that cinema going is not such a bad alternative to street-playing or slum home life. The next section of the enquiry is devoted to conduct. It is argued that the main influence of the "movies" upon children is indirect. "Motion pictures are not textbooks, but romantic and dramatic presentations of life apparently vivid with colour, emotion and appeal, and generally demonstrating successful consequence of action." The values that they suggest and create in young people's minds are, however, anything but good. The screen, according to this enquiry, is a pathway to delinquency : and perhaps, with the corruption of American municipal life as we know it, it is not an exaggeration to suggest that, on that side of the Atlantic, "the exhibition of gangster pictures in so-called high delinquency neighbourhoods amounts to the diffusion of poison."

Much evidence is given to show that there are "movie-made criminals" in the United States, as well as a small counter-element of deterrence and correction of crime arising from the films. It will be seen that the Payne Fund



Enquiry reaches conclusions far more sweeping and definite than have been reached in this country. In his summary of the whole, Dr. Charters reminds us that, after all, the film is but one of the many influences which go to mould children's minds and lives; and there is some reason for thinking that it is not so powerful an ingredient of the child's mental environment in Britain as in U.S., and consequently exerts a less harmful influence. No very constructive remedies are proposed in the enquiry, except the encouragement of the movement for special theatres and programmes for children, as a counter attraction to the ordinary adult programmes.

R.S.L.

**FOR FILMGOERS ONLY.** Published for the British Institute of Adult Education, 39, Bedford Square, W.C.1, by Faber and Faber, 2/6. With an introduction by R. S. Lambert.

This book, which is described as "The Intelligent Film-Goer's Guide to the Films," sheds the light of authority on the five main points on which intelligent public interest in the cinema is focussed to-day. Paul Rotha, the screen's historian, gives an outline of its development; Andrew Buchanan, who popularised the "interest" film through his *Cinemazine*, writes on propaganda; Mary Field (of the *Secrets of Nature* films) on education by cinema; the compensatory psychology of box-office films is discussed by R. S. Lambert, who, as editor of a B.B.C. weekly, and a Governor of the British Film Institute, is directly concerned with the two chief forms of popular mass-produced entertainment to-day; and C. A. Lejeune, of the *Observer*, gives a practical lesson in film criticism.

The essays were originally delivered in the form of lectures at the Y.W.C.A. headquarters in London, and of the five Rotha's close-knit summary probably gains most by its re-appearance in book form. He provides us, in the space of a dozen pages, with a useful source of reference for the output of America, England, Germany, France, Sweden and Russia over the thirty odd years of his subject; deals with over fifty films and as many directors, and includes a commentary on modern film tendencies, all considered from the point of view of "purposeful direction." The fact that there is a barrier of clumsy mechanism and heavy expense between the film director and the realisation of his purpose has meant that development has been largely in the direction of technical perfection, leaving the imaginative aspect of production to take the line of least resistance. Once the director had grasped "the value of the film's capacity to split up time and space and re-create them in terms of cinema" the artistic progress of the film ceased to correspond with the steady upward curve of technical development, the use of sound being (in Mr. Rotha's opinion) still in the experimental stage. The lack of co-ordination between the "box-office" film (as distinct from the documentary) is sharply criticised: "Of late," says Mr. Rotha, "American films have attempted to carry some semblance to modern conditions, but the tendency is probably one for box-office motives and has no meaning behind it"—a statement which seems to imply that entertainment films should not only reflect modern conditions, but act as propaganda in shaping them.

It is in the documentary film that Mr. Buchanan sees the most practical and effective means of using the screen for constructive propaganda. Documentary is concerned with the material of real life, which the director, unhampered by the army of functionaries apparently necessary to the creation of a star feature, can cut and intercut and fashion into a weapon more powerful than any other available to the modern propagandist. What is needed to make it still more effective is more movement; a creative use of sound as distinct from dialogue, and above all a constructive purpose behind newsreel editing—a plea which is echoed by Mary Field in her paper on educative films. Miss Field, who is particularly concerned with audiences of children, utters a warning about the dangers of believing without reservations all that one sees on the screen, but at the same time argues that certain inaccuracies may be desirable for practical reasons. The greatest value of the cinema as a teaching instrument is its power of supplementing the human eye;

it has proved its worth in scientific records by photomicrography and infra-red photography; by eliminating the time factor in slow-motion and speeded-up action; in language teaching films by recording the movements of lip and jaw; and there are possibilities as yet unexplored in the teaching of music and handicrafts.

An even more urgent question is the need for a constructive policy in planning entertainment for the increasing leisure of millions of people. The responsibility lies with the public as well as with the producers: what is needed, says Miss Lejeune, is intelligent and constructive criticism, not merely of unusual pictures (which thrive on it but are only available to the minority) but also of the mass products of England and America, which constitute the average weekly fare for the public as a whole. There are roughly four thousand cinemas in Great Britain; Miss Lejeune points out, "and when you reckon that most of these four thousand cinemas show four new feature films every week you begin to realise how important the quality of the ordinary programme must be to the nation at large."

Mr. Lambert, analysing the reaction of film audiences to the fare provided for them, points a significant contrast between the planned entertainment offered by the radio and the unplanned entertainment of the cinema; both catering for the same public, and both numbering their patrons in millions. Not altogether a fair comparison, perhaps, since broadcasting has the same kind of pull over the cinema as the cinema has over other comparable forms of entertainment, i.e., it is cheaper, more comfortable and more continuous; and wireless programmes would receive considerably less support if they entailed leaving one's fireside and standing in queues. But, in both, these "material advantages" tend to bring about a state of passive receptivity in their audiences, and we are in danger of forgetting how to look at pictures just as many of us have forgotten how to listen to music. In the case of the cinema this state of affairs is highly desirable from the point of view of the producer. To pay its way a picture must contain nothing that might cause any section of its potential public to stay away; it must therefore evade all intellectual issues which would split up its audience into factions with marked preferences for one type of picture to the exclusion of another. It must send its audience away in a comfortable and above all unargumentative frame of mind by showing them a world where all is for the best, and which provides unlimited excitement with greater realism and even fewer disturbing implications than their Sunday newspapers.

The question is whether the trade is not defeating its own ends by over-production. The traditional slogan of business in the entertainment world, says Mr. Lambert, is to give the public what it wants, but by dint of competition and advertising the trade itself is forcing the public to choose what it wants, and the old index of the lowest common denominator no longer applies. Publicity has made us all potential critics: it may only be present in the form of a preference for Clark Gable over Leslie Howard, but the germ of discrimination is there, and if our particular type of actor or film is not being shown we stay away. Among those who are more discriminating in their choice some stay away altogether; others are showing an increasing tendency to voice their preferences, and in the absence of specialist theatres to group into societies and rent the pictures they want for themselves.

The five essays were originally delivered as lectures in answer to the question "Are Films Worth While?" The challenge has since been taken up on behalf of both the producer and the public by the British Film Institute, whose constitution and aims are described in a note at the end of this book. As a summary of the constructive thinking that is being exercised on the subject of films at the present day *For Filmgoers Only* is an extremely significant publication, and the British Institute of Adult Education is to be congratulated on its timely appearance. Y.M.R.

We understand that John Grierson is making rapid progress with his new film of the B.B.C.

Mr. Grierson's second article on "Propaganda and the Cinema" will appear in the summer issue of *SIGHT AND SOUND*.



# RECORDS OF THE QUARTER

By T. L. MacDonald

From the present issue this section includes notes on the principal issues of the Columbia, Decca (including Decca-Polydor), His Master's Voice, and Parlophone (including Parlophone-Odeon) series. Current prices and reference letters: 12" records: Col. LX, H.M.V. DB, and Odeon R, 6s.; Col. DX, H.M.V. C; Parlo. E; Polydor CA; 4s.; Decca T, Polydor LY, 3s. 6d.; Decca K, 2s. 6d. 10" records: Col. LB, H.M.V. DA, Odeon RO, 4s.; Col. DB, Decca M, H.M.V. B, Parlo. R, Polydor DE and PO, 2s. 6d.; Decca F, 1s. 6d.

## ELGAR

At this moment, when the sense of our loss is uppermost, it is well to recall how good a friend Elgar was to the gramophone. The gramophone has also served him well; and never better than in the two records issued in the quarter of his passing. The Triumphal March from "Caractacus" tells of a still more tragic farewell to Britain; for beneath the surface we feel always the broken spirit that has abandoned even liberty. For Elgar himself there was always the sustaining faith bodied in the sensitive themes of the Prelude to "The Kingdom." Both records to be noted, but especially the second: H.M.V. DB2142 and 1934.

## STRAUSS

These three months offer almost a survey of the work of Richard Strauss. At the head of the list by undoubted right is the H.M.V. album of *Der Rosenkavalier*—ideal cast (Lehmann, Olszewska, Schumann, Mayr...)—recording up to the minute—as a plain statement of fact the best yet in operatic recording. The biggest problem must have been what to record; quite complete, there would have been moments of tedium where spectacle is uppermost. Cutting is always dangerous, but the dangers have been overcome. The essential scenes are quite uncut. The only omission which may be regretted is the irrelevant Italian Serenade in the first act. And here it is, in a first-class rendering by Herbert Groh, on Parlophone R1674. Next, naturally, the new work, "Arabella"; Lotte Lehmann brings out the resemblance to the *Rosenkavalier*; but I fear she confirms the view that this opera is not in the same street. There could not be a better recording. (Excerpts from Act. 1: Parlo. Odeon R020236-7; there are also excerpts, partly different, on Polydor DE7024-5.) That curious work, "Ariadne on Naxos" is represented by Zerbinetta's Air (Polydor LY6081). Adele Kern is a singer to watch for all-round competence; she has done a number of good things for Polydor. Lastly a welcome re-recording of "Death and Transfiguration" from Parlophone, E11243-5. The performance is a well-knit whole, the different sections well contrasted, and the recording as good as any. Dr. Weissmann conducts.

## THE COLUMBIA HISTORY OF MUSIC

The historian's task becomes more difficult as it progresses; not only because there is more to choose from, and a certain degree of subjectivity

enters in; but still more because so much is recorded which limits the choice of fresh material. The fourth volume, roughly covering the nineteenth century, is only less difficult than that projected for the latest phases. (There is to be a sixth, to present the history of opera as a unity). Here it is plainly unfair to criticise omissions; and there is little to carp at in the inclusions, provided we remember that it is a history and not an anthology that we are offered. Otherwise certainly the prominence given to Field and MacDowell would be surprising; but it does not take much thought to see that something of the sort had to be given. Mr. Scholes defines his period as "Music as Romance and National Expression"; neither description has much content left by now, but the selection shows what is meant. First there is Berlioz: the second movement of "Romeo and Juliet"; then one record contains nocturnes of Field and Chopin; four sides of *lieder* by Schumann, Brahms, Wolf; and MacDowell's "1620" to end the romantics. Four of the remaining five sides are given to Balakiref's "Russia," the now famous recording; and Dvorak is represented by one Slavonic Dance. Mr. Scholes' "text-book" is a joy.

## ORCHESTRAL

Beethoven: Symphony No. 4, Weingartner and London Philharmonic Orchestra, Col. LX274-7 (album); Mozart: Symphony No. 41 (the "Jupiter"), Beecham conducting same orchestra, Col. LX282-5 (album).

Outside of the vocal and operatic field, this is very much a Columbia quarter. Another Weingartner symphony is good news; I suppose it is one of the greater mysteries that the 4th and 5th of Beethoven should come from the same company, in the same conductor's reading with the same orchestra, in one season—at two different prices. Of course it is quite worth the brighter label; but if the fourth doesn't sell as well as the other, it ought to. A set to bear much repetition. The fill-up is the Prometheus Overture. It was time for a new "Jupiter." Sir Thomas puts real life into the work; he is in full control of Olympus; not very subtle sometimes, after Weingartner. The recording remains a trifle keen for acoustic reproduction.

Bach: Suite No. 3, Boult and B.B.C. Orchestra, H.M.V. DB1963-5; and Brandenburg Concerto No. 1, Melichar and Berlin Philharmonic, Polydor LY6082-4; Mozart: Eine Kleine Nachtmusik, Weissmann, Berlin State Opera Orchestra, Parlo. E11241-2; and four German Dances, Kleiber and Berlin Philharmonic, Polydor CA8171.

The suite is the one with the famous air, so-called "on the G String"; if you like the sentimentalised versions, don't try this one. The music seems to me to show Dr. Boult at his best. The fill-up is an inferior arrangement of the prelude to the sixth violin sonata; you may know it in one of its other forms. Bach nomenclature is more difficult than



Bach music ! I recommend the Brandenburg most heartily. It is a dignified reading, in the best German tradition. The British pressings from Polydor matrices seemed for a while definitely inferior to the imported copies. They have been improving steadily. I have no fault to find with the present copies, so the difficulties appear to have been overcome. At the price this makes them a bargain. The Mozart Serenade rather shows the faults of the German style ; it has been over-amplified. Parlophone have done much better ; some unevenness in the output is a small price to pay for the varied selections from unique foreign recordings which this company is able to offer. The German dances are taken from four different works ; they are attractive little pieces, a trifle amplified. I think they are all different from a set of six recorded by Polydor some time ago.

Of several Overtures H.M.V. C2603, containing the best recording of Quilter's Children's Overture, should be noted for educational collections. Rossini's "Italian in Algiers" overture is also recommended (B8041). Columbia sends another "Bartered Bride" overture, DX562, which may compensate those who cannot have the historic issue of the complete opera by the Czech branch of H.M.V. The latter is the most complete and authentic recording possible. A selection from it ought to be put together for issue here. Parlophone send a very interesting little suite, "Granada," by a new Spanish composer, Emilio Lehmborg. It is not very important, but the bright colouring will be appreciated and the atmosphere seems genuine (R1759). Returning to H.M.V., Barbirolli's Orchestra offer the "Bohemian Girl" overture, as good as anything there is of its kind (C2635), and the usual Järnefeldt compositions, Praeludium and Berceuse (B8112)—not another Sibelius ! Columbia's issue of selections from the stage version of the Peer Gynt music (DB1268-9) is interesting, but not enhanced by the "effects." There is, however, a good band record of the Prince Igor dances, by the B.B.C. Military Band, Col.DX564.

**CONCERTOS :** Schumann : Pianoforte Concerto, Yves Nat and Orchestre Symphonique de Paris, Col. LX278-81 (album) ; Mendelssohn : Violin Concerto, Szigeti, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Col. LX262-5 (album) ; Lalo : Symphonie Espagnole, Menuhin, Orch. Symph. de Paris H.M.V. DB1999-2002 (album).

The Lalo work is properly placed here ; it is really a suite for violin and orchestra. The movements are quite short : the first and last take two sides, second one, third and fourth share three ; but there is nothing very deep to develop. Sunny Spain seen from outside ; well coloured and very charming. The other works are, in each case, the composer's only one for the particular combination. The Mendelssohn does not strike one as great music, but it has had as much care as if it was. First movement three sides—fill-up very sensibly on the fourth (a little caprice of Paganini) ; Andante two sides, transitional passage and Finale two sides. The Schumann is the most important of the group. The pianist, I think new to the lists, shows much sensitiveness. The whole thing gives a lighter

effect than we are getting accustomed to hear. A movement from a Litolff piano concerto on Col. DB1267 is notable for the crisp tone of Irene Scharrer ; it is a not very distinguished scherzo.

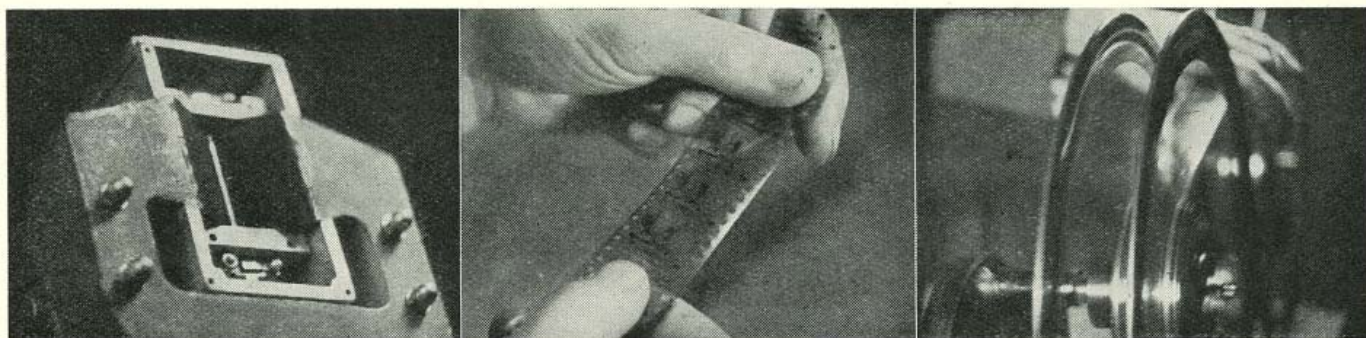
### OPERATIC AND VOCAL

The Parlophone company is doing good work in making operatic selections of authentic quality available at a very moderate price. The Wagner series to which R1703-4 belong, is particularly to be recommended ; they offer the most famous scene of the first act of Walküre (I think complete) including "Wintersturme," "Du bist der Lenz," and the drawing of Nothung. A notable bargain. Emmy Bettendorf and Herbert Groh offer the finale of act 3 of "Faust" on R.1736 and an extract from "Tales of Hoffmann" on R.1757, the latter backed by Groh and Gerhard Husch : "Solenne in quest'ora" (in Italian) ; and the chorus of Berlin State Opera have a rousing Triumphal March ("Aida") on R.1673 (in German) : all worth hearing. In addition to records already mentioned, Lotte Lehmann offers a scene from "Werther" (Odeon RO20240). This calls for another special recommendation ; Mme. Lehmann is one of the most consistent and artistic recording singers anywhere. Another artist in perfect control of his instrument is Richard Tauber ; consistently charming, he makes amends for the inconsequence of most of his selections by his latest issue, Odeon R020239 : one of Mendelssohn's more significant songs is coupled with Hugo Wolf's fine "Über Nacht." A third recommendation. Of the H.M.V. issues, Gigli's are mostly just vehicles for showing off his fine style (for example DB1585) ; his airs from "Mignon" are more attractive to me (DB1270). Tibbett's "Song of the Flea" is delightfully sarcastic. He treats the Tolstoi "Pilgrim's Song" (Tchaikovsky) in an entirely different style. A desirable record (DB1945). Joseph Schmidt continues to exploit the standard tenor repertory in fine voice (B8036). His selections, in German, are pretty well known as "M'appari" and "Di quella pira." But B8103 is my choice from the H.M.V. group : Paul Robeson, "Water Boy" and "Steal Away." For Decca, their English and Italian stars, Titterton and Valente, continue to add to their recordings with more attention to salesmanship than distinction—a pity, for they are amazingly moderate in price. Plunket Greene records two folk songs, English and Irish, for Columbia, DB1321—yet another recommendation.

### ORGAN

Genuine organ tone is the most difficult of all recording feats. We are getting distinctly nearer it. The Hollins Overture and Widor March on H.M.V. C2590 show that. This is also the first record of the B.B.C. organ ; the marked improvement is probably to be put largely to the special construction of an instrument intended primarily for broadcasting. The organist is Berkeley Mason. Just afterwards, two records of the Bach Toccata and Fugue in D minor appeared ; one by Thalben Ball, H.M.V. C2610 ; the other by G. D. Cunningham, Col.





From *PRINCIPLES OF SOUND RECORDING*, by Frank Goodliffe (G.B.I.) On the left is a close-up of the microphone; the delicate metal ribbon, vibrated by the sound waves, produces minute electrical currents which are then amplified and recorded. Centre: A strip of motion picture negative to which "sound" will be added later by double printing. Right: the problem of wear and tear. Film is constantly subject to abrasive handling, damaged sound tracks causing rushing sounds.

DX515. The first has the advantages of the B.B.C. organ; I think the second will be found the more satisfactory performance; but both should be heard.

### CHAMBER MUSIC

The Schubert Quartet chosen to introduce the Kolisch Quartet to the gramophone public is that in A minor Op. 29, introducing the famous Rosamunde "theme song." It thus gives the players every opportunity; and they have used their chances well. This is also a very suitable quartet to illustrate both the composer's thought and a large number of technical points. The recording is very suave. Col. LX286-9.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### A Library of Geographical Films

Dear Sir,

I venture to make the following suggestions arising from my experience with a school cinema, as being of some possible interest to your readers and to the British Film Institute.

Probably the main educational value of films lies in their ability to give understanding of and sympathy with the lives of contemporaries in other lands. Black faces, shaven heads, strange diets, cease to be "funny." If this be so the British Film Institute would be doing a great service if it devoted its earliest labours to the establishment of the complete geographical library of films.

Starting with the British Isles—rural populations would be interested to know *all* about conditions in industrial areas, about mining, smelting, weaving, etc., and urban populations would be equally interested in rural occupations. I am aware that this has been partially done, but I think a complete systematised set of films should be a national possession.

So with the Dominions and Colonies. Complete records of the work and pastimes of old and young would be of incalculable value. This, too, I know has been partly done, but there is need of gap-filling, and editing even in the best of the sets, while some of the colonies remain practically unrepresented. As regards foreign countries, the Education Committee of the League of Nations' Union could be persuaded (perhaps) to arrange for international exchange of sets of "duped" negatives.

Every overseas film should begin with a map showing steamer or land route with a time scale. The man in the street simply does not know how far away or how long away Cape Town is, or Bombay, or Hong Kong. I suggested "gap filling" in connection with the Colonies. I am certain that the necessary enthusiasts could in most cases be found on the spot to make the negatives, if the local government or/and the Colonial Office would co-operate to the extent of providing the cameras, etc. The expense would not be heavy in comparison with the value of the result, and the apparatus would always be there to document events.

As regards exhibiting, I would suggest the following:—

1. Divide the country into districts; boundaries to be fixed according to the number of exhibitors in areas.
2. Circulate a pre-determined three years' course of films regularly round each district.

Each district would have its complete programme of films always circulating.

A mobile repair unit would be attached to each district with a fixed headquarters at a convenient central point.

Once the scheme was started, subscriptions from exhibitors and L.E.A.'s would defray working expenses, which should not be heavy.

Yours faithfully,

CHARLES BAWN,

Addison Gardens L.C.C. School, London, W.

### Sound Proofing

Dear Sir,

On page 160 of your Volume 2, No. 8 issue, Mr. G. Pocknall expresses the opinion that modern and future intermittent cinematograph cameras for professional use will be built into a case or housing which will damp out all noise of the mechanism.

As designer of the remarkably successful model my Company has produced, I have to disagree with his views. From experience gained over many years it is my firm opinion that no intermittent camera can be produced in a normal casing that will be dead silent when running film. Even if the mechanism reached this ideal, we are still faced with the noise caused by air displacement of the two film loops at the gate; also, no electric motor has yet been produced that runs dead quiet, so that sound proofing will always be necessary. This raises the very important question as to whether it should be built into the camera case and the motor included therein, or be a separate housing called a blimp. I am in favour of the latter method for the following reasons.

Sound proofing, to be effective, must have mass, and when forming part of the case this adds considerably to the difficulty of film threading and about three times to the weight of the unit (the new Bell & Howell which he mentions, I am informed, weighs 150 lbs.).

The built in motor cannot be ventilated, so that trouble would arise, especially in hot countries. No sound proofing exists for the magazines, unless each one is separately treated, adding more weight to the outfit. All this is difficult to carry out if it is to be effective, consequently up goes the capital and maintenance cost, and when accomplished we have an outfit which is a confounded nuisance on external location where portability is so essential.

Our camera with motor weighs only 42 lbs. and as such is perfectly safe on any external shots with the microphone at 4ft. and is, as Mr. Pocknall mentions, ideal for newsreel work. It is also ideal in the studio, as in its blimp the total weight is only 120 lbs. and the same external facilities for control exist as those that have the built-in proofing method.

I feel it would add to Mr. Pocknall's very interesting articles if he would give the weight of the outfits reviewed.

Yours truly,

106, Wardour Street, W.1.

W. VINTEN.



# CINEMA ON SUNDAY

The origin and provisions of the Sunday Entertainments Act, 1932.

UNTIL 1931 the Sunday opening of cinemas was prohibited by the Sunday Observance Acts, 1625 to 1780. Nevertheless, some cinema licensing authorities in England purported to make arrangements by which they permitted, or at any rate did not object to, Sunday opening, usually (though not invariably) on the condition that the whole or some prescribed part of the Sunday profits was devoted to charity. This practice was challenged in 1931 by a series of actions brought by a common informer for recovery of the penalties incurred under the Sunday Observance Acts.

The practice was regularised temporarily by the Sunday Performances (Temporary Regulation) Act of 1931, which provided that where, within one year before the passing of the Act (7th October, 1931), cinemas had been opened and used on Sundays for the purpose of cinematograph entertainments in pursuance of arrangements purported to have been made with the local licensing authorities, those authorities might allow such cinemas to continue to be used on Sundays for that purpose subject to such conditions as they might think fit to impose.

In 1932 the matter was dealt with on a permanent basis by the Sunday Entertainments Act passed on 13th July of that year. Section 1 of this Act authorises local licensing authorities in England and Wales, in the circumstances explained below, to allow cinemas in their areas to be opened and used on Sundays for the purpose of cinematograph entertainments subject to such conditions as they think fit to impose, which must include the following two :—

1. that no person shall be employed by any employer on any Sunday in connection with a cinematograph entertainment or any other entertainment or exhibition given therewith who has been employed on each of the six previous days either (a) by that employer in any occupation or (b) by any other employer in connection with similar entertainments or exhibitions ; and
2. that such amount as the licensing authority fixes, being the estimated profits from the Sunday opening or some proportion of them, shall be paid as to the prescribed percentage thereof, if any, to the authority for transmission to the Cinematograph Fund and as to the remainder to persons specified by the authority for application to charitable objects.

As regards the first of these two conditions, it will be seen that there is no objection to the Sunday employment by any employer in connection with a cinematograph entertainment or any other entertainment or exhibition given therewith of a person who has been employed by some other employer on each of the six previous days if the employment was not in connection with similar entertainments or exhibitions.

The Cinematograph Fund mentioned in the second condition is a fund established by the Act for the purpose of encouraging the use and development of the cinematograph as a means of entertainment and instruction. It consists of a share of the payments to be made by cinematograph exhibitors

in respect of Sunday opening, viz., such percentage thereof, not exceeding 5 per cent., as may be prescribed by regulations made by a Secretary of State. The Fund is under the direction and control of the Privy Council, which will decide in what manner the moneys from time to time standing to the credit of the Fund are to be applied for the purpose in question.

The provisions of section 1 of the Act (see paragraph 3 above) apply automatically to every area in which, within the period of twelve months ended 6th October, 1931, cinemas were opened and used on Sundays for the purpose of cinematograph entertainments in pursuance of arrangements purported to have been made with the local licensing authority. These provisions may be extended to other areas subject to the exercise of local option through the borough or urban district or rural district council.

Where the verdict, as expressed in a borough or urban district by the decision of a public meeting, if final, or the result of a poll, or in a rural district by the absence of a sufficient number of objections to require an inquiry or the report of the person appointed to hold an inquiry, is in favour of the proposed extension, the Council may submit the draft order to the Home Secretary. Where the verdict is against the proposal, the matter is at an end.

On receipt of a submission in any case, the Home Secretary makes an order in accordance with the draft, viz. :—

"In accordance with the provisions of the Sunday Entertainments Act, 1932, I ..... one of His Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State, hereby order that as from the date on which this order has been approved by resolutions passed by both Houses of Parliament, section one of the said Act shall extend to the borough (or urban district or rural district) of....."

As shown in the order it does not become operative until it has been approved by each House of Parliament. The approval by Parliament in ordinary circumstances is a foregone conclusion, but experience has already shown that in an exceptional case approval may be refused. In that case the order related to the urban district of Sidcup and would have authorised the licensing authority to allow the Sunday opening of a cinema in the main Sidcup road, the other side of which is in the Chislehurst urban district. Objection was taken to the order on the ground that a considerable number of Chislehurst residents were directly concerned but had not had the opportunity of expressing their opinions in the matter.

It is important to note that an order is only an enabling instrument. It does not in itself authorise Sunday opening in the area. It merely extends section 1 of the Act to the area, and thereby gives the licensing authority power in future to allow Sunday opening subject to the prescribed conditions. In one case (Bromley) the Council, having ascertained as the result of a poll that public opinion was in favour of the extension of section 1 of the Act to the area and having accordingly sought and obtained an order duly made by the Home Secretary and approved by Parliament, has since refused to allow Sunday opening.

B.T.



## TECHNICAL AND TRADE REVIEWS

# THE FILM IN THE MAKING—V.



## AUTOMATIC CAMERAS

By  
George Pocknall

From Flaherty's *MAN OF ARAN*, which was filmed on an automatic camera (G.B.)

**T**HE constant desire of the director to be able to place his camera in the position of his actor has been a prime factor in the production and design of the so-called automatic camera, though admittedly this desire was not originally the reason for the inception of the automatic. It was first the result of the need for a machine that one could use in inaccessible places, where the heavy standard apparatus with its tripod was almost useless.

### Early Automatic Cameras

In its earliest form the automatic camera was limited to two very heavy, bulky and complicated mechanisms of 400 ft. capacity. These were the *Aeroscope*, by Polinsky, and the *Gyroscope*, by Moy. The *Aeroscope* was driven by compressed air obtained by the rather exhausting use of an over-sized bicycle pump, the motive force which drove a very beautiful miniature single cylinder engine. It was, however, very delicate and complicated, suffered somewhat from valve trouble, and the presence of dust or dirt could be guaranteed to put the engine, and therefore the camera, out of commission. It was, nevertheless, an attempt and a forerunner. The Moy camera was, if anything, more reliable but more weighty and bulky, being accompanied by rather heavy accumulators necessary to drive its self-contained motor. The *Gyroscope*, as its name implies, was fitted with a motor driven gyroscope for the purpose of maintaining camera steadiness. Had both these machines been designed

with a film capacity of 200 feet they would have been far handier; they did however, for several years hold the field of cameras capable of being operated while held in the hands. The ability to operate them in this way was more theoretical than practical, but some very good work was done with these two machines, particularly in aerial filming.

The Bell and Howell Company, with their *Eyemo* camera, were next in the field, with the production of the self driven machine that could be used in the hands with a reasonable amount of comfort and precision. It was, and is, a camera that can be relied upon to produce a picture where the ordinary outfit would be useless.

The Bell and Howell *Eyemo* is a clockwork-driven machine of 100 ft. capacity, and can be supplied with or without a revolving lens turret, and is capable of being used with long or short focus lenses. The film is accommodated on open spools, the stock having at the beginning and end a length of black opaque film which is wound tightly round the outside of the roll and is of sufficient length to permit of threading an attachment to the take-up spool. On completion of exposure of the 100 ft. spool the camera is opened up, and the take-up spool will be found to have several layers of the black opaque film wound round the outside of the film. The end of this opaque film is pulled tight and made fast with an elastic band or stamp paper, and the spool is put away in the camera case or the pocket to await development. The camera can by this method be loaded in daylight.

Another clockwork camera, the *De Vry*, followed very closely on the advent of the *Eyemo*. This machine also utilises the open spool system of charging and is of 100 ft. capacity. It is a thoroughly reliable



# THE BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE

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The British Film Institute exists "to encourage the use and development of the cinematograph as a means of entertainment and instruction." Its objects are:—

1. To act as a clearing house for information on all matters affecting films at home and abroad, particularly as regards education and general culture.
2. To influence public opinion to appreciate the value of films as entertainment and instruction.
3. To advise educational institutions and other organisations and persons on films and apparatus.
4. To link up the film trade and the cultural and educational interests of the country.
5. To encourage research into the various uses of the film.
6. To establish a national repository of films of permanent value.
7. To provide a descriptive and critical catalogue of films of educational and cultural value.
8. To advise Government Departments concerned with films.
9. To certify films as educational, cultural or scientific.
10. To undertake similar duties in relation to the Empire.

## WHAT IT NEEDS

In pursuance of this programme the British Film Institute desires to secure the support of all bodies and individuals that have at heart the encouragement of the best type of film and the full development of the constructive uses of the cinema. Alike in the public cinema and in the schoolroom and lecture room, the film has a growing influence upon thought and action. The purpose of the British Film Institute is to encourage the best features of this influence and to draw together all those who are concerned in its exercise. A strong membership of the Institute will be a guarantee that this work is being worthily and fruitfully performed. You are invited to lend it your support either by subscribing as an individual or by inducing corporate organizations to which you belong to apply for membership.

It is proposed to form Branches of the Institute throughout the country. Information as to the necessary procedure to establish these will be forwarded on request.

## HOW TO OBTAIN MEMBERSHIP

The Institute being a Company limited by guarantee it is necessary for intending members to fill up the form of application which will be found overleaf and forward it together with a subscription of 10/6 for the half-year ending June 30th, 1934. A copy of the Memorandum and Articles of Association will be forwarded for perusal if desired. Corporate Bodies can become members of the Institute by paying an annual subscription of not less than £5 5s. Such subscribers would entitle the affiliated organization to commensurate privilege of membership.

Members will be entitled to receive publications issued by the Institute, including (1) the official organ, SIGHT AND SOUND; (2) a monthly review of new films suitable for educational or instructional purposes and entertainment films of unusual merit, and (3) an annual report on the year's work.

Copies of SIGHT AND SOUND are available to non-members at the price of 6d. per copy (7½d. including postage), and a separate subscription form will be found on the next page.



# THE BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE

## APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

To the Governors

I hereby make application to be admitted to membership of the British Film Institute and agree, if elected, to observe the provisions of the Memorandum and Articles of Association and the Rules and Regulations of the Institute for the time being in force.

I enclose herewith the sum of £1 1s. 0d. (or 10/6, if after December 31st) and will pay annually on July 1st the yearly subscription of £1 1s. 0d.

I further undertake, if elected, to contribute to the assets of the Institute in the event of its being wound up while I am a Member or within one year after I cease to be a Member, for payment of the debts and liabilities of the Institute contracted before I cease to be a Member, and of the costs, charges and expenses of winding up and for the adjustment of the rights of the contributors among themselves such amount as may be required, not exceeding one pound.

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*Full Name* .....  
(Title, Mr., Mrs. or Miss)

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little camera and the mechanism is really beautifully made ; it possesses the added advantage of being fitted with a form of visual focussing, which renders it unnecessary for the operator to be an expert judge of distances, which he certainly must be if he has only the scaling of his lenses to work with. Both the Eyemo and the De Vry suffer from the faults inherent in the use of the open spool system of loading, the disadvantages of this method being that camera stoppages are so easily brought about by the partial closing in of the sides of the spools. This closing needs to be only slight to cause the edges of the film to be nipped during the revolution of either the feed or take-up spool. The other disadvantage is that if a jam occurs it is not possible to open up the camera, except in a dark room or changing-bag, without fogging not only the scene taken but also a considerable amount of the unexposed stock still remaining.

### The Newman Sinclair Camera

Both the Eyemo and the De Vry were followed by a clockwork camera of English design and manufacture, the Newman Sinclair, which, it is safe to say, now holds the place of honour among automatic cameras. It embraces many valuable features, chief of which are the facts that it is of 200 ft. capacity and does not use the open spool system of charging. The film roll is situated in a magazine which contains within itself the feed and take-up mechanism ; the camera is loadable in the brightest sunlight and can be opened up at any time without fogging either exposed or unexposed film. The shift movement has the added refinement of pilot pin registration of the negative during each exposure ; also there is no gate pressure during the movement of the film, and if properly looked after the camera is entirely free from scratching. Though it is not fitted with a lens turret, lenses of any focus, from one and a half to seventeen inches, can and have been used. With the shorter focus lenses the focus and the iris diaphragm controls are at the back of the camera. I personally have been able to do much follow-focus work, combined with altering of exposure, during actual shooting, entirely by the convenience of having these controls placed in this position. The machine is fitted with a very adequate means of visual focussing. Fades-in and out and mixes can be obtained with this camera, and it is also possible to wind back the film for double exposure if desired. The two criticisms that I have to make are the rather excessive weight of the camera and the inconvenient position of the finder, which aggravates parallax troubles when closer shots are being taken.

### Portability and Cost

Many films have recently been made with automatic cameras only, and if the camera-man is equipped with a light gyro tripod he has a camera outfit that is portable enough to be taken down a coal-mine or to the top of the highest building. In the production of documentary, commercial or travel films, where the cost of transport may well be the deciding factor between profit and loss, and where

the production personnel must of necessity be small, the automatic camera, completely equipped, more than holds its own.

### The Automatic on Documentary Films

It is interesting in this connection to note that Flaherty's *Man of Aran* was made entirely on an automatic camera ; and its photographic quality will compare very favourably with many films taken on standard machines.

The smallness of the automatic camera, together with the fact that it is self-propelled, renders it the ideal machine for the positioning of the camera in most inaccessible places and for the weird camera angles so often (and no doubt justifiably) desired by the director.

To give one example from my work, I have been engaged in shooting a documentary film of some magnitude. A very complete ploughing sequence was required, showing among other details, the earth falling away from the share, a view through the horses' heads, as seen by the ploughman, and a close-up of the ploughman himself ; all these shots to be taken during the actual ploughing. By making a rough contrivance of two boards that could be clamped on to the plough frame, taking off the head of my light gyro tripod, fixing it to the top board, and putting my automatic on the head, I was able to position the camera exactly, and then all I had to do was to walk with the plough and start and stop the camera whenever I wished. With an ordinary outfit, these shots would have been impossible ; the ploughman could certainly not have controlled the plough with the enormous weight of a standard camera complete with motor and batteries.

### Studio Work

In studio work the automatic is also extremely valuable. A light clockwork camera can be used strapped to an operator while he wanders, moving carefully, and steadily, among the crowd. I have heard of an automatic camera being fixed to the microphone boom in place of the microphone and shots taken downwards, using the boom extension and rotation with advantage. I myself did a shot for a circus drama with an automatic while I was careering down a slide at a fair.

For aerial work the automatic has no rival ; it can so easily be made to clamp on to the side of the cockpit ; and where the weight question is important, the fact that it does not require heavy batteries is usually the deciding factor in its selection.

There is no reason why an automatic camera should not be an exact replica of its big brother, fitted with a front attachment arranged to take any filters, gauzes or other gadgets.

Automatic cameras are now available with considerable control of speed in taking—say from eight to thirty-two pictures per second. One quite new introduction is the Newman and Sinclair slow-motion automatic, with a top speed of one hundred and twenty pictures per second.



# SAFETY FILM AND SAFETY REGULATIONS

By H. D. Waley

**N**UMEROUS examples could be quoted of inventions held up because the abstract ingenuity of the inventor had outrun the material resources of his own day.

The researches of Edison into the filament lamp came near to fiasco for this reason. In other instances the material indispensable for the realisation of the idea has, as it were, dropped straight from heaven into the lap of the inventor, who may often enough only realise his luck in the light of subsequent events.

It was by such a stroke of luck as this that Friese-Greene was able to obtain celluloid strips from Eastman as a substitute for the glass plates with which he had been attempting to make moving pictures. Eastman was interested in celluloid as a backing for photographic emulsion because glass plates, being breakable and heavy, stood in the way of his ideal—a light and portable hand-camera.

Friese-Greene's problem was somewhat different. For him the difficulty of taking and showing moving pictures had resolved itself into the difficulty of substituting one still picture for another in sufficiently rapid succession, both behind the camera lens and behind the projector lens. So long as his images were on a glass plate he had against him impossible problems of inertia when he attempted to start and stop a long series in quick succession. The substitution of a light flexible ribbon, isolated sections of which could be flicked past the lenses in a series of jerks, was from most points of view the ideal solution of this difficulty, and from most points of view celluloid was an ideal material for the ribbon. It is capable of extreme transparency, resists lengthening by tension, shrinks in a consistent manner when soaked and dried, adheres well to a coating of gelatine, can be welded rapidly and durably, and is not prohibitively expensive to produce. These good qualities are counter-balanced by only two drawbacks, firstly it is extremely inflammable, almost explosive, and secondly that it undergoes spontaneous decay even when stored under favourable conditions. So far, in spite of unremitting and often very costly research every effort to evolve a substance which shall have all the advantages of celluloid without its drawbacks has been unsuccessful. "Non-flam" or "safety" films, as the cellulose acetate substitutes for celluloid are called, all suffer from the following drawbacks—their shrinkage is irregular and unpredictable, they may stretch under tension, under heat they part with their water content and become brittle, they tend to break or come unstuck at the joints, and occasionally fail to offer a firm hold to their coating of emulsion. It has in fact in addition to its fire-resisting factor only one advantage over celluloid—when stored it resists decay better. In spite of all these technical shortcomings its fire-resisting qualities are of such paramount

importance that the widest possible use of safety film is strongly to be urged. The Institute of Amateur Cinematographers recently petitioned Parliament and the L.C.C. for measures against the sale of celluloid film of standard width in connection with certain cheap types of toy cinema, and a subsequent accident near Dover, recorded in the morning papers of the 26th February last, shows that their apprehensions are only too well grounded.

In fact in considering the advantages of sub-standard apparatus one has not only to take into account the question of greater portability but also the question of fire risk, since where standard-gauge apparatus is used there is always the danger of confusion between celluloid and non-flam film. It is, in fact, imperative, since the use of standard film outside the theatres, though decreasing, still continues, that some distinctive, easily visible marking should be used by manufacturers to enable celluloid film to be distinguished from safety film. The printing of a tiny triangle between the perforations of safety-film has been proposed by the British Kinematograph Society Standards Committee and the proposal has been favourably received in America and Germany. I believe that a measure of this kind would be hastened on if it were generally realised how often reels which purport to consist solely of safety stock are really interspersed with lengths of celluloid through negligence in printing or cutting departments. Such negligence is at present very difficult for the user of the film to detect. This difficulty is increased by the modern film-printer, which partially blacks out whatever maker's marks may have existed on the margin. At present it is advisable for anyone who is handling a supposedly non-flam reel of standard film to scrutinise it very closely. Words visible on the margin in white letters may be disregarded, since these are merely off-prints from the maker's marks on the negative. For example, genuine non-flam film may easily be found to carry the words "nitrate film" in white on its margin, but should these words appear in black, it is definite proof that the film bearing them is not non-flam.

The adoption of a standardised mark would bring in its train another reform, also urgently called for; the formulation of standardised characteristics for "safety" or "non-flam" film. At present the practical definition of these words really rests with the local authorities who issue instructions to the inspectors supervising cinema displays at trade shows, assembly halls and so forth. The need for a recognised standardisation of safety film is particularly acute owing to the phraseology employed in drafting the Cinematograph Act, 1909. This act provides that no cinematograph exhibitions are to be held except at premises licensed for the purpose. The object of the licence is to enforce the observance of certain safety regulations. Specified are exceptions:



- (1) Where non-inflammable films are used.
- (2) Exhibitions in private houses, where the general public are not admitted.
- (3) Where premises are not used for this purpose more often than 6 days in one year, but in this case the occupier must
  - (a) Give 7 days notice in writing to the Licensing Authority and the chief officer of police.
  - (b) Comply with the regulation of safety laid down in Statutory Rules and Orders 1923 No. 983.
  - (c) Comply with any conditions imposed in writing by the licensing Authority.

It will be observed that the first of these exceptions entirely hinges round the definition of the phrase "non-inflammable." The Act contains no such definition, and the question is left, in the last resort, to the decision of the justices. In actual practice I have never come across a case of refusal by inspectors to recognise as non-inflammable any of the makes of "non-flam" or "safety" film at present on the market, though I believe that some of them do contain among their ingredients a certain proportion of celluloid.

Exception No. 3 covers the case of those who wish to use celluloid film in a public display in some building, such as an assembly hall, which is only occasionally used for film-shows. Anyone with intentions of this kind would be well advised to procure from H. M. Stationery Office, Adastral House, Kingsway, London, at the price of eightpence post free, a copy of these regulations (No. 983, 1923) and study them carefully. Without any attempt to supersede this necessity it may be mentioned that the rules in question relate to two alternative cases—either a portable projector complying with certain specifications must be used or else the projection apparatus must stand in a fireproof enclosure.

Portable fireproof projection boxes are cumbersome and costly affairs, and therefore the purchaser of a portable projector should make sure that it is constructed in accordance with these regulations.

He should not, however, imagine that any regulations are capable of being framed which can render unnecessary the use of a great deal of caution and commonsense in dealing with celluloid film.

Those who are called on to handle it and have never seen it burn should cut a piece six inches long off the "leads" of their copy, take it to a safe spot, and put a match to it. This simple experiment will afford a better warning than any written words can do.

## NEW APPARATUS

We have inspected the following pieces of apparatus with a view to noting recent changes embodied in their design:

'Permarec' home outfit for recording and reproducing sound-on-disc. Will Day, Ltd., 19, Lisle Street, London, W.C.2.

This outfit has now been adapted for 12 ins. diameter records run at gramophone speed (80 r.p.m.) or 16 ins. records run at the slower speed standardised for sound-on-disc accompaniment to film (33 $\frac{1}{3}$  r.p.m.) each side of the 16 ins.; disc runs for about 16 minutes. When a projector is linked to the apparatus alternative attachments are provided for speeds of 16 or 24 pictures a second.

Recent enquiries from educational users open up interesting vistas of speculation regarding possible applications of amateur sound-recording.

A teacher of dancing has found it convenient to make her own instructional records which deliver general instructions to the class while she herself circulates, giving individual attention to each pupil in turn.

Another class of cases arises whenever a limited circulation only can be expected for a film requiring sound. For example, a surgeon is employing this method of adding a running commentary to medical films.

### Synchrophone Educational Sound Cine. Synchrophone Ltd., 24, Berners Street, London, W.1.

This is a 16 mm. sound-on-disc projector which can also be used as a radio-gramophone. The designers have adopted for this instrument the cabinet form in preference to the suit case type of design more usually favoured. The cabinet form of construction certainly assures noiseless running and saves the labour of dismounting and assembly between shows. On the other hand if it were required to use the instrument from time to time on different floors or even in different rooms the weight and bulk of the cabinet model would be unwelcome. This difficulty has to some extent been overcome by an alternative model which embodies a cabinet capable of being lifted apart into two halves. The projector mechanism displays several unusual features. The intermittent movement is a six-armed maltese cross, driven by a striking pin, which is withdrawn so as to miss the slot every alternate revolution, this enabling its shaft to run at twice the speed which would otherwise be possible. Hence follow a rapid film-shift and correspondingly narrow shutter blades. Full advantage has been taken of these characteristics by the provision of a double-bladed shutter running at two revolutions per picture. The image on the screen therefore comes and goes no less than 96 times a second and all suspicion of flicker is avoided.

Gear boxes provide for turntable speeds of 80 and 33 $\frac{1}{3}$  revolutions per minute, and for projector speeds of 16 or 24 pictures a second, as desired. The mechanism is totally enclosed and packed in graphite grease, so that the user is completely freed from the labours of lubrication. Ample light for a picture six foot wide is obtainable from the usual 250 watt lamp, but a 500 watt lamp can be used, if desired.

### Western Electric 16 mm. sound-on-disc projector. Western Electric Co., Ltd., Bush House, Aldwych, London, W.C.2.

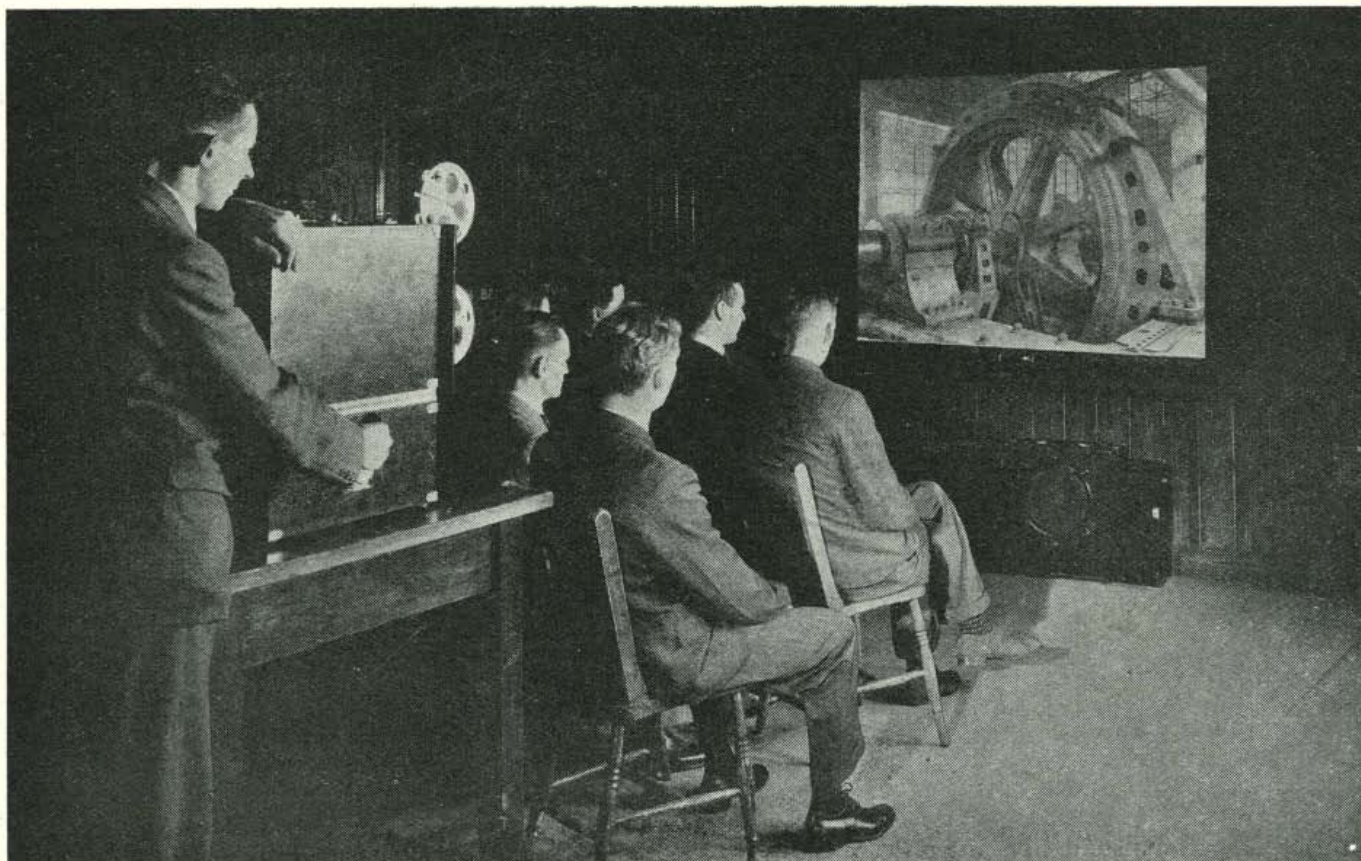
The new model is provided with variable gearing which enables the projector to run at 16 or 24 frames a second and the disc to run at 33 $\frac{1}{3}$  or 88 r.p.m. The motor has been totally enclosed with a view to noiseless running. Improvements in the optical system have resulted in an increase of illumination over the old model averaging 12 $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. Greater portability has been achieved by rendering the projector quickly detachable from the disc assembly and providing a separate packing for it. None of the packing-cases now exceed 50 lbs. in weight. An illustration of the apparatus will be found in the last number of SIGHT AND SOUND. It is anticipated that in view of the limited number of films at present available educational users will prefer to hire for single shows rather than to purchase the apparatus outright, and full facilities have been arranged for this.

### Trix Radio Amplifier, 8, Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C.1.

At the request of the Trix Electrical Company we have inspected their current models of sound-amplifying equipment. Their models range from a small set suitable for indoor audiences of two hundred to three hundred people up to a high-powered set suitable for very large interiors or outdoor use. The prices are reasonable and should be within the purchasing power of educational users, but the company are prepared also to hire out apparatus. It is anticipated that there will be an increasing demand from educational users in connection with large halls and churches where the acoustic conditions happen to be unsatisfactory, and also in connection with such functions as school sports and outdoor theatricals.

H.D.W.





Engineers watching a demonstration film on a B.T.H. 16mm. projector

## SUBSTANDARD PROJECTORS AT A GLANCE

The list below aims at giving a concise survey of the sub-standard projectors at present available in this country.

Particulars can be obtained from the majority of dealers in photographic and optical apparatus. Should any difficulty be encountered in obtaining particulars of any of these projectors the Film Institute may be consulted.

8 mm.			9.5 mm.			16 mm.			16 mm with Sound		
									Sound on Film		
Kodascope	£9	9 0	Pathescope	£2	15 0	Synchro-	£28	10 0	G.B. - -	£135	0 0
to	£25	0 0	to	£30	0 0	phone to	£37	10 0	B.T.H. -	£150	0 0
			Coronet -	£2	5 0	Ensign -	£7	10 0	Marshall	£145	0 0
			Midas*	£7	7 0	to	£29	10 0	R.C.A. -	£105	0 0
			Bolex**	£24	0 0	Kodascope	£18	18 0	to	£165	0 0
			to	£47	0 0	to	£92	10 0	Victor -	£126	0 0
						Bell and	£68	0 0	Bell and		
						Howell to	£95	0 0	Howell	£200	0 0
						Ampro -	£60	0 0	Sound on Disc		
						Victor -	£60	0 0	W.E. - -	£255	0 0
						Siemens -	£36	0 0	Synchro-		
						to	£95	0 0	phone -	£98	0 0
						Zeiss-Ikon	£16	0 0	Bolex -	£115	0 0
						to	£62	10 0			
						Agfa - -	£25	0 0			
						Bolex -	£24	0 0			
						to	£47	0 0			

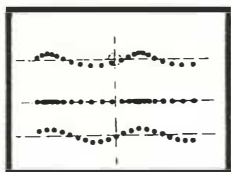
Notes.—\*The Midas projector (Camera-Projectors Ltd.) will also function as a camera.

\*\*Bolex silent models priced at £36 and £47 and the Bolex Sound-on-Disc model priced at £115 will take both 9.5 and 16mm. films.

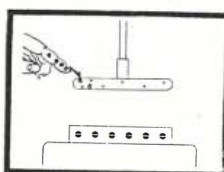
H.D.W.



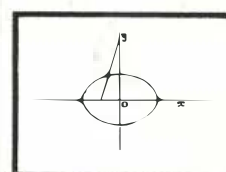
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